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HISTORY OF THE BOMBAY PIONEERS



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THE BOMBAY PIONEERS.

L. to R. Two Mahrattas of 128th, Jat of 48th, Pathan of 107th, Rajputana Mussalman (Mco) of 121st and Sikh of 12th Pioneers.

HISTORY OF THE BOMBAY PIONEERS

BY

LIEUT.-COLONEL W. B. P. TUGWELL

1938

THE SIDNEY PRESS LIMITED
LONDON AND BEDFORD

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MADE AND PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
THE SIDNEY PRESS LIMITED
LONDON AND BEDFORD



J. Russell & Sons

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR CLAUD JACOB, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., K.C.M.G.

INTRODUCTION

by

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR CLAUD JACOB,
G.C.B., G.C.S.I., K.C.M.G.

THIS history of the Corps of Bombay Pioneers is in reality a history of five different Regiments which eventually became Pioneer Battalions.

Prior to 1888 the Bombay Army had no Pioneer units, but campaign after campaign proved that no force could be complete without a Pioneer Regiment in its composition.

In 1888 the 28th Bombay Infantry became the 28th (Pioneer) Regiment of Bombay Infantry, and this was the first regiment in the Bombay Army to be reorganized as Pioneers.

In 1900 the 7th Bombay Infantry was formed into Pioneers. In 1903 the 21st Bombay Infantry (The Marine Battalion) became a Pioneer unit. These three Bombay regiments had long records of service—the 21st was raised in 1777, the 7th in 1788 and the 28th in 1846.

Various changes in the organization of Pioneer units took place after the Great War, and two other Pioneer Regiments were added to the Bombay Pioneers—the 12th and 48th Pioneers, raised in 1838 and 1901 respectively.

The history of these five units is fully recorded in the following pages.

Appointments to Pioneer Regiments were much sought after because chances of seeing active service

were greater than in other infantry units, as no expedition could take place without Pioneers accompanying it. Pioneers were unique in that they were fully trained infantry as well as being excellent in technical work such as road making, railway work, building, etc. The latest triumph of Pioneering work was the construction of the motor road through the heart of Waziristan in 1924-5. Six Pioneer Battalions and five Companies of Sappers and Miners were employed on this road, which was practically completed in nine months. This was the biggest concentration of technical troops that had ever been made in the history of the Army in India.

In the Great War of 1914-18 so great was the need for Pioneers in the British Army that every Division had a newly-raised Pioneer Battalion attached to it. As there were over 70 Divisions it can be realized what a large number of Pioneer units had to be formed.

In spite of the fact that active service in India or on the North West Frontier requires Pioneer troops, the authorities in India, I presume for motives of economy, decided to disband every Pioneer unit. This meant the removal from the Indian Army of the twelve Pioneer Battalions which formed :

The Corps of	Sikh Pioneers	...	3 units.
„	Madras „	...	3 „
„	Bombay „	...	5 „
The Hazara	Pioneers	...	1 unit.

Total ... 12 units.

One of the official reasons given for this wholesale disbandment was

“The changed policy on the Frontier under which local civilian labour is now employed for road construction.”

This may be possible in peace time, but every officer of experience knows that in time of active operations civilian labour is unobtainable. The civilian coolie will not face the “music.” If we had depended on

local civilian labour to make that road through Waziristan it would never have been completed in the short time our Pioneers and Sappers took to do it. The very first shot from the enemy would have scattered the contractors and their coolies. It is inevitable that the next expedition on even a moderate scale will demand Pioneer troops and the General in command is certain to ask for them.

All Pioneer units in the Indian Army have now disappeared and no trace of them can be seen in the Indian Army List. When the five Irish Regiments of the British Army were disbanded on the 31st July, 1922, they were and still are not forgotten for their names and battle honours are shown in the Monthly Army List—a graceful compliment to those great Regiments. A similar page in the Indian Army List about our Pioneers might serve as a reminder of those units who have done such fine service for India in the past.

“Sic transit gloria mundi.”

Clarendon W. Jacob.

Field Marshal

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SO many persons have helped me in the compilation of this regimental history that my acknowledgments must be in a concentrated form. I offer my thanks to :—

The three officers commanding at the time of the disbandment of the Bombay Pioneers, for entrusting this work to me.

Lieut.-Colonel A. K. Macpherson, M.V.O., for criticizing each chapter as it was completed, and for much help and encouragement.

Lieut.-Colonel H. P. Keelan, D.S.O., for taking charge of the financial side of the undertaking, and for his assistance with the narrative of the Somaliland campaign.

Field-Marshal Sir Claud Jacob, G.C.B., G.C.S.I., K.C.M.G., for writing the Introduction.

The late Captain A. R. Spurgin, for passing on notes to me whilst he was collecting material for the "History of the Sikh Pioneers."

Major E. P. Yeates, for writing Appendix 9.

Sir Patrick Cadell, C.S.I., C.I.E., for notes about the early times of the Marine Battalion, which he kindly sent me whilst he was writing his recently published "History of the Bombay Army."

Colonel E. L. Hughes, D.S.O., O.B.E., the Librarian and Curator of the Royal United Service Institution, and also to the Librarian and to the Superintendent of Records at the India Office, for their courteous help.

Brig.-General Sir J. E. Edmonds, C.B., C.M.G., Director of the Historical Section (Military Branch)

of the Committee of Imperial Defence, for allowing me access to the war diaries.

The following officers for furnishing information on various subjects :—Colonels N. G. B. Goodfellow, C.I.E., R. J. Cuming, D.S.O., O.B.E., Lieut.-Colonels C. C. Cunningham, D.S.O., H. W. Tobin, D.S.O., O.B.E., W. L. Stewart Meiklejohn, E. W. Burdett, D.S.O., M.C., F. H. Farebrother, D. B. Gray, O.B.E., M.C., G. A. Clarke, A. C. Shute, C.M.G., C.B.E.; Majors G. B. Davies, A. T. Sheringham, D.S.O., E. B. Mangin, M.C., G. C. Cooper, M.C., R. D. Whitehill; Captains E. W. Geidt, W. V. Clark and all others who have helped in any way.

For the illustrations I have to thank :—

The Controller of H.M. Stationery Office, for permission to reproduce "The Devil's Staircase" from "The Expedition to Abyssinia," by Holland and Hozier, and also for allowing me to make use of the map of McNeill's Zareba in "The Sudan Campaign," by Colonel M. E. Colville.

The Editor of "The Illustrated London News" for kindly permitting the reproduction of several pictures.

The Officer Commanding 1st Bn. The Royal Berkshire Regiment, for lending the block of the picture of the Battle of Tofrek.

Messrs. John Murray, for the sketches of Kelat-i-Ghilzie in 1879, from "The Life and Times of Sir James Browne," by Lt.-Gen. J. J. Macleod Innes, V.C.

Messrs. Edward Arnold and the author, Brig.-Gen. W. E. R. Dickson, C.M.G., C.I.E., for kindly lending me the blocks of the pictures "Kacha Gorge" and "Birjand," from the book "East Persia."

Captain F. H. Mellor and Messrs. Selwyn and Blount, for permission to reproduce the picture from "Sword and Spear" of the 2nd Bn. 128th in Turkey.

I am grateful to Mr. C. C. P. Lawson for the great trouble he took over the details of the two pictures

he painted for this book, and to Mr. Childerstone for his painting.

I also wish to thank the Sidney Press Ltd. for the interest and care they have taken in making this book.

A list of the books I have used as authorities appears in Appendix 13.

W. B. P. TUGWELL.

44 Kimbolton Road,
Bedford.

May, 1938.

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CHAPTER I

THE ROLE OF PIONEERS

ON the 10th February, 1933, not only the Corps of Bombay Pioneers, but all the Pioneers of the Indian Army, were disbanded, so, as a prelude to this history of the battalions from which the Corps of Bombay Pioneers was formed, it may be well to describe what was implied by the name of "Pioneers."

In the "Orders of Battle" of our old armies, which fought in Hindustan in the eighteenth century, there often appears the name Pioneers. But these old Pioneers were the parent units of the present Corps of Sappers and Miners, and none of the battalions of the Bombay Pioneers can claim direct descent from them.

When, in 1888, the 28th Bombay Infantry became the 28th (Pioneer) Regiment of Bombay Infantry, on the model of the already existing Madras and Punjab Pioneer regiments, they were the first unit of this kind in the Bombay Army. They were still essentially infantry, but they carried the necessary tools, and received suitable training to enable them to carry out rough field engineering, especially the construction of roads and tracks, in a more efficient manner than other infantry.

The dictionary definition of a pioneer as "one that goes before to clear the way," gives a good description of the original idea of their special work. They were required for operations in undeveloped countries, where few roads exist which are passable for an army and where roadmaking has to be done in proximity to an enemy. They were always available and ready to be used as infantry.

Pioneer battalions were found to be so useful in the

many small wars in which they were employed that the number of such battalions was increased from time to time, either by converting infantry battalions into Pioneers or by raising new battalions. Thus in 1864 there were two Pioneer battalions in the Native army in India, by 1890 there were six, and in 1904 their number had reached twelve.

Service in Pioneers was much sought after by British officers joining the Indian Army, because of their high reputation, the frequency with which they saw active service, and the variety in their work.

The official pronouncement* on the rôle of Pioneers, which was in force in 1914 at the beginning of the Great War, was as follows :—

“ In India a pioneer battalion forms part of the divisional troops. This battalion can be used, if required, to supplement the engineer field companies in the duties described in this section, for all of which pioneers are trained and equipped. With expert assistance they can also be employed in the alignment of roads, platelaying, and the repairing and laying of light railways.

In battle, however, pioneers, being primarily fighting troops, will normally be used as such.”

At this time Pioneers were organized, trained and armed exactly as Infantry, indeed they were Infantry, but in addition they underwent extra training in Field Engineering and carried “ Pioneer Equipment ” to enable them to do their special tasks.

A Pioneer battalion had a number of artificers on its establishment—carpenters, smiths and “ mochis ”—who were trained and graded by the Sappers and Miners, and workshops were kept up in Pioneers’ barracks. As many men as possible were also trained in dry stone-walling and bricklaying. In peace they were usually under an Infantry Brigade Commander, being inspected in Field Engineering once annually by a Commander Royal Engineers. On Brigade Training and on larger manœuvres they were employed as Infantry.

All British and Indian Officers, and as many

* Sect. 5 of Field Service Regulations, Part I, Operations, 1909. Reprinted in 1914.

N.C.O.s as possible, were required to qualify in Field Engineering at a three months "Pioneer Course," held at the Headquarters of one of the Corps of Sappers and Miners.

In peace time Pioneer battalions were encouraged to take up civil contracts to construct roads, railways, irrigation dams and other such work, and this gave them useful experience in engineering. A good example of such a civil contract is the construction of the Matheran Light Steam Tramway by the 121st Pioneers in 1904. This light railway was built by a private contractor of Bombay City, and it took the battalion a year to construct it. The work consisted in making thirteen miles of rail-road to the top of a precipitous hill, a rise of 2,000 feet, and then laying the rails.

That the extra training in Field Engineering did not impair their efficiency as infantry may be judged by the following extract from an inspection report on the 128th Pioneers by Major-General H. L. Smith-Dorrien, C.B., D.S.O., dated 23rd March, 1905:—
"I have no hesitation in saying that this Pioneer Battalion has been so thoroughly well trained in all field movements and war requirements by Colonel W. St. L. Chase, V.C., C.B., that had it been allowed by the rules to compete for H.E. the Commander-in-Chief's cup for efficiency it would have been assigned the highest marks amongst Native Infantry Corps in the 4th Division."

The cup alluded to is that commonly known as "Kitchener's Cup," which was awarded to the infantry battalion which obtained the highest marks amongst all battalions in India in the compulsory competition, lasting several days, in marching, the attack, and various field exercises. In the Order* introducing this competition, Pioneers were stated to be ineligible for obtaining the cup, though they were to be tested as other infantry battalions. The real point in General Smith-Dorrien's remarks is that the

* Indian Army Order 726 of 1904.

cup for all India was won by an Infantry Battalion in the 4th (Quetta) Division, of which he was in command.

The "Pioneer Equipment" carried by these battalions requires some description. Every sepoy carried on his back, in a leather case secured by straps, either a light pick-axe or a hoe-like tool called a "mamootee."

It was this equipment which distinguished the appearance of Pioneers from all other troops.

N.C.O.s and buglers, instead of the pick-axe or mamootee, had other tools distributed amongst them, each carried in a suitable case, such as felling axes, hand axes, bill hooks and saws.

The remainder of the Pioneer equipment was carried on mules, in suitably designed loads; this included light shovels, crow bars, jumping bars, cross-cut saws, boxes of guncotton and its accessories, carpenters' and blacksmiths' tools and many other articles.

To compensate for the extra weight, each sepoy carried only seventy rounds of ammunition, as compared with the 100 rounds carried by infantry.

Although this tool on the back was rather awkward when working as infantry, especially in mountain warfare, yet the fact of having it on the man sometimes enabled work to be carried out in difficult country without the delay of having to wait for transport to bring up tools. In some types of country this proved a real advantage.

In France the 107th found that the mamootee did not suit them well for trench digging; they therefore themselves converted the leather equipment to hold a shovel, and did not carry the mamootee on the man during the remainder of the war. The 121st also adopted this alteration.

On mobilization for the Great War, each Indian Division had one Pioneer Battalion allotted to it as part of its Divisional Troops. This battalion, for all field engineering work, was normally under the Commander Royal Engineers of the Division. The Pioneers worked in close collaboration with the Field Companies of the Sappers and Miners of the Division,

with the gallant and efficient officers and men of which they established a close friendship.

The Indian Corps arrived at the front in France just as the long period of trench warfare (which might perhaps be better called siege warfare) was commencing, after "the race for the sea"; and the advantage in constructing field defences which the possession of a Pioneer battalion, in addition to Field Companies of Engineers, gave the two Indian divisions over the British divisions, which then had no Pioneers, became apparent.

Lord Kitchener, when Commander-in-Chief in India, had been keen on Pioneers, and it was greatly owing to his instigation that, late in 1914, British Pioneer battalions were raised for each of the Service (New Army) Divisions. Eventually every division, both Regular and Territorial, had a Pioneer battalion on its establishment.

But these British Pioneers differed in some respects from their Indian prototype; having been raised primarily for trench warfare, they were more exclusively engineer troops, and the majority of them had not been so thoroughly trained in infantry work, nor imbued with the idea that their chief duty in battle was to fight as infantry.* They did not adopt the characteristic "Pioneer Equipment," but carried all their tools on transport carts or mules.

As these British Pioneer battalions had never formed part of the peace-time army, they were all disbanded, together with other war-time units, at the conclusion of the war.

Several factors now caused the idea to be accepted generally that Pioneers were primarily engineer troops. The long-drawn-out period of trench warfare made field engineering of increasing importance, and as there were many more British than Indian divisions actively employed in the field, the British Pioneer

* This applies only to battalions raised as Pioneers and not to Infantry battalions converted into Pioneers. Several British Pioneer battalions fought doggedly as infantry during the German break-through in 1918.

battalions became more commonly known than the Indian.

Although on first arrival in France the Indian Pioneers were occasionally employed as infantry, they were soon used only as field engineers, and later an order was published in France that they were not to be used as infantry. In Mesopotamia, however, they continued to fight in battle as infantry for a longer period.

Thus by the end of the war the pre-war principle that Pioneers were available for engineering work when required, but in battle would be used as infantry, had become completely altered.

On recommencing peace-time training, much more attention was allotted to technical work, though on manœuvres Pioneers were still frequently utilized as infantry.

In 1922, each Pioneer battalion (except Training battalions) was reorganized into Battalion Headquarters, a Headquarter Wing and three Companies. The four Vickers guns were taken away, and of the sixteen Lewis guns only six were left, as a Group in the Headquarter* Wing. Signallers were still retained. Tools were no longer carried on the man, but all were put on transport mules or into carts, and the leather Pioneer equipment was replaced by the Infantry web equipment.

In the year following this partial disarmament of Pioneers, when the 1st Battalion 2nd Bombay Pioneers were in Iraq, it appeared probable that hostilities would have to be renewed against the Turks. This battalion of Pioneers was then immediately rearmed with the full number of Lewis guns allotted to an infantry battalion, which they retained until they left Iraq.

* A Headquarter Wing consisted of :

A Headquarters.

No. 1 Group. Signallers and Band.

No. 2 Group. Lewis Gunners, with six Lewis guns.

No. 3 Group. Artificers and Administrative personnel.

No. 4 Group. Transport, Tailor and Bootmakers.

An order* was issued in 1927 defining the rôle of Pioneers :—" Pioneers are primarily technical and are maintained and trained in peace for their technical duties in war. Pioneer battalions are organized into three companies to suit technical requirements primarily. Consequently they will only be employed as infantry in an emergency or as a secondary rôle."

Later the "sapperization" of Pioneers, as it was popularly termed, went a stage further, when at the time of the reorganization of Indian Pioneers into Corps in 1929, the six remaining Lewis guns and all signalling equipment were withdrawn, thus making it impracticable for them to function as infantry. This new organization was so arranged that Pioneers could be employed normally as independent companies, after the manner of Field Companies of Sappers and Miners.

The official reasons given for this change were as follows :—

"(a) The Railways had organized their labour so as to be able to take over, on mobilisation, certain semi-technical works formally allotted to Pioneers.

"Two battalions of Pioneers earmarked for railway construction were thus rendered surplus to requirements.

"(b) The modern requirements of war having increased the highly technical duties of Sappers and Miners made it necessary for Pioneers to assume much of the less highly skilled work previously undertaken by Sapper and Miner companies.

"It had, therefore, become impracticable for Pioneers to continue in their dual rôle of 'efficient infantry and not inefficient Sappers and Miners.'

"(c) If Pioneers were to be relieved of infantry work and be employed only as engineer troops, their composition and armament should be similar to that of Sappers and Miners. This permitted of the abolition of their Lewis gunners and signallers, with the resultant economy in expense."

Sappers and Miners have Royal Engineers as officers, who have had the complete and thorough technical education which those officers undergo, whilst the British officers of Pioneers came from the

* I.A.O. No. 345 of 1927.

same source as Infantry officers, and so, the infantry rôle of Pioneers having disappeared, it followed that Pioneers felt themselves at last to be in a position of some inferiority as compared with Sappers and Miners. Also the existence of two classes of troops whose rôle was identical appeared to be illogical. It was therefore generally felt that this state of affairs could not last for long.

It was thought that further developments might take one of the following courses :—

(i.) That Pioneer companies would take over all the duties of Field Engineer companies with Indian Divisions, and Sappers and Miners do the more highly technical work usually allotted to Engineer companies with Corps and Armies.

(ii.) That the former rôle of Pioneers would be reintroduced, i.e. that they be armed and trained as infantry, and in battle normally be used as such, whilst being available and trained to assist in the less technical forms of field engineering, such as road and railway making, at other times, when required.

(iii.) That Pioneers would be reconverted into infantry battalions.

(iv.) That Pioneers would be disbanded and all engineering in the field be undertaken by Sappers and Miners, whose strength would be suitably augmented.

The matter was not left long in doubt, for in July, 1932, the decision was announced by the Commander-in-Chief in India, H.E. General Sir Philip Chetwode, Bart., G.C.B., K.C.M.G., D.S.O., that all Pioneers were to be disbanded, the official reasons for this decision being given as follows :—

“(a) The changed policy on the Frontier under which local civilian labour is now employed for road construction.

“(b) At present there are two types of field engineering units, one of which, i.e. Pioneers, cannot assume the rôle of the other, i.e. Sappers and Miners.

“(c) Engineering troops of a division must be homogeneous and organized on lines suitable for their general rôle. The Sapper and

Miner organization is that most suited to the tasks of a division and, moreover, the work of Field Companies embodies everything now done by Pioneers.

“(d) By concentration of work in one organization, greater efficiency will be obtained in respect of direction, control and output, and an unnecessary link in the chain of administration will be eliminated.

“(e) The retention of an organization which is not fully suited to our needs cannot be justified.”

On the 10th February, 1933, the disbandment was completed and all Pioneer battalions were struck off the strength of the Indian Army.

CHAPTER II

THE RAISING OF THE BATTALIONS AND THEIR EVOLUTION INTO THE CORPS OF BOMBAY PIONEERS

THE Corps of Bombay Pioneers consisted of a Corps Headquarters and two active battalions, named the 1st (Marine) Battalion and the 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion, Bombay Pioneers.

This Corps was formed in 1929 by merging the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 10th Battalions, 2nd Bombay Pioneers, in such a way that each of the new units would contain an equal number of officers and men from each of the old battalions. This device had the effect of avoiding the disbandment of any battalion, but also none of the new units could claim to be exclusively descended from any one battalion of the former organization.

The genealogy of the Corps is best shown by the Table in Appendix 1, which it is suggested should be referred to before reading further.

This Record, then, has to trace the history of five battalions and their second battalions of the Great War period. Three of these battalions originally belonged to the Bombay Army and two to the Bengal Army.

Here are the names they were given at the time they were raised and also at the time when Lord Kitchener was Commander-in-Chief in India, in 1903, and all the battalions of the Indian Army were given consecutive numbers :—

	Original Name.	Name in 1903.
Bengal Army.	3rd Regiment of Infantry,	12th Pioneers.
	Shah Shujah's Force.	(The Kelat-i-Ghilzie Regt.).
	48th Regiment of Bengal Infantry (Pioneers).	48th Pioneers.

	Original Name.	Name in 1903.
	4th Battalion of Bombay Sepoys.	107th Pioneers.
Bombay	The Marine Battalion.	121st Pioneers.
Army.	28th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry.	128th Pioneers.

In this account of the raising of the battalions, they are dealt with in order of seniority* and under the names received in 1903, by which they were known throughout the Great War.

121ST PIONEERS

The Portuguese, who forestalled the English in India, were fine seamen, so it was necessary to defeat their navy before the English could secure a firm foothold in India. This they did at Swally in 1615. A small force of grabs and gallivats, which had been raised by the Agent of the Honourable East India Company at Surat, assisted at this important victory. Grabs were ships up to 300 tons, having from one to three masts, and armed with 6, 9 and 10 pound guns. Gallivats were vessels up to 70 tons, propelled by oars, and carrying a few 2 or 4 pounders.

This was the start of what came to be known as the Bombay Marine, and in 1830 as the Indian Navy.

In 1661 King Charles II, on his marriage to Katherine of Braganza, came into possession of Bombay, which place he handed over in 1668 to the East India Company in return for £10 a year, and on account of its splendid harbour Bombay soon superseded Surat as the base for the fleet.

A shipbuilding yard was opened at Bombay in 1735. The ships built in it were as strong, handsome and well-furnished as those constructed in Europe, and being made of teak they lasted longer than those made of oak.

In times of peace the duties of the Bombay Marine

* The 107th took precedence on parade over the older 121st, as this was ruled by the date of becoming a regular regiment of the line of the Bombay Army.

were defined as : (1) The protection of trade. (2) The suppression of piracy. (3) Convoying transports and conveying troops. (4) Maritime surveys. (5) Assisting merchantmen in the monsoon.

But in the days of the Bombay Marine there was seldom peace. From 1793 to 1803 the Bombay Marine was continuously engaged in fighting, and again from 1809 to 1821. During 1824-26 it played an important part in the first Burmese War. In 1827 some of its ships blockaded Berbera. Its sphere of action included the African coast from Madagascar northwards, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, the Bay of Bengal, the Irawaddi, the Malay Archipelago, the China seas and the Australian coast.

Up to 1777, small detachments from the Bombay troops were often employed as marines in the ships of the Bombay Marine, but the Government then decided on the raising of a Marine Battalion especially for this duty, and this is the battalion which eventually became the 121st Pioneers.

The following is a copy of the Government Order for the raising of the Marine Battalion, under date the 3rd January, 1777.*

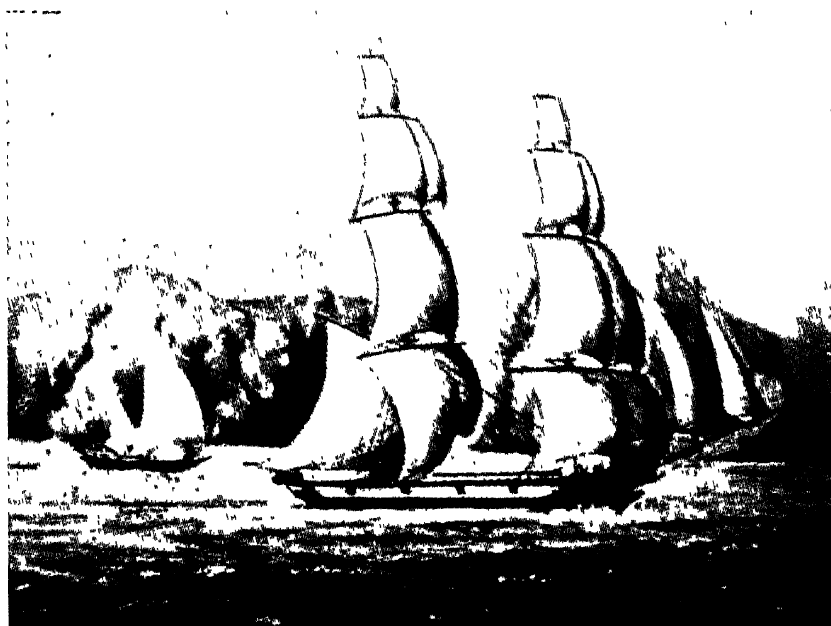
“The Honourable the President and Council have been pleased to order that five hundred Sepoys shall be raised as a Corps for the Service of the Marine, and the same encouragement given to them, as to the other Sepoys in the Establishment.

“This Corps to consist of Five Companies, and each Company to consist of 1 Subadar, 2 Jemedars, 1 European Sergeant, 6 Havildars, 6 Naiques, 1 Fifer, 2 Drummers and 85 Privates.

“They have also been pleased to appoint Captain James Jameson to the Command of this Corps, and Lieutenant William Hudson, Adjutant, also to add :

* The above date is given in the Marine Battalion's "Digest of Services" and in the Indian Army List, but the decision of Government to raise a Marine Corps is dated 31st December, 1776.

A Corps of Marines had been approved as early as the 29th September, 1769 (Bombay Consultations XXVII, Pt. iii, page 151), but it does not seem to have been formed.



THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S BRIG "TIGRIS," 1829.

A Black Commandant.*

An European Sergeant.

A Black Adjutant, to be one of the Jemadars.

A Black Doctor.

A Fife Major, one of the Fifers.

A Drum Major, one of the Drummers.

A Head Sub-Assistant Apothecary, and two other Sub-Assistants."

The Battalion was not deemed effective until late in the year 1777, when it was reviewed and a General Order was published on the 17th November, of which this is an abstract :—

"The Commanding Officer, being entirely satisfied with the appearance and behaviour of the Marine Battalion at the Review this morning, thinks proper to signify the same in Public Orders, and desires the Commandant to thank the inferior officers, in his name, for their diligence and attention.

"As the Battalion is intended to perform all Marine duties, they are, on Thursday morning next, to relieve all the Detachments from on board the Gallivats and Vessels in the Service of the Honourable Company now lying in the harbour of Bombay with a like number."

On the 9th January, 1778, an Order of Government was published as follows :—

"The Honourable the President and Council, finding the Marine Battalion of Sepoys insufficient in number to do the Duties required from it, have been pleased to order, that it be augmented as soon as possible to eight Companies, which are to consist of one Hundred Private Men each, with the same number of Black Officers as are at present allowed to each Company, and no increase of European Officers."

When the Bombay Army was reorganized in 1796 (as described later under the 107th Pioneers) the Marine Battalion was left alone, except that it was increased to ten companies and ordered to be commanded by a Major and to have a similar number of inferior officers as the other battalions of Native Infantry.

* The senior Indian Officer. The rank of Subadar-Major was not introduced in the Bombay Army until 1818. For classes enlisted see Appendix 2.

The undernamed officers were posted to the Marine Battalion :—

Major William Williamson, with leave to the Cape of Good Hope.

Captain William Lambert, Dept. Commy. of Stores at Tannah.

Captain E. M. Foreman, with leave to Europe.

Captain David Price, Judge Advocate.

Captain John Wynne.

Lieut. Angus Grant, with leave in Europe.

Lieut. Thomas Cape.

Lieut. John Turner, Barrack Master.

Lieut. E. C. S. Waddington.

Lieut. E. F. Kemp, Town Adjutant at the Presidency.

Lieut. M. Kennedy, General Quarter Master and Fire Engine Keeper at Surat.

Five Lieutenants. Vacant.

Five Ensigns. Vacant.

Adjutant Thomas Cape.

Assistant Surgeon. Vacant.

In 1779 the Grenadier Battalion (later 101st Grenadiers) was formed from drafts of the grenadier companies of six battalions of Bombay Sepoys and from two complete companies from the Marine Battalion.

In 1802 the Honourable Company ordered that “considering the Marine Battalion at your Presidency to be of material importance,” it was to be commanded by a Lieutenant-Colonel, and “in consideration of the active and zealous services and sufferings* of Lieut.-Colonel Williamson, who formerly commanded that Battalion,” he was appointed to the command.

This appointment evidently did not please the officers of the Battalion, as they presented a memorial to the Government, representing the injury they sustained by the command being taken from Major Buchanan. This memorial was forwarded to England, and in March, 1804, a reply was received that the

* *Vide* page 32.

Battalion was to revert to the former system and be commanded by a Major.

The following is a copy of an order :—

“Bombay Castle,
25th April, 1810.

“The Honourable the Governor in Council has been pleased to order the following Regulations to be framed for the Government and Conduct of the Marine Sepoys, serving on board the Honourable Company’s Cruisers, with the view of defining their duties so as to prevent the occurrence of complaints between the two branches of the Marine Service.

“1st. The Sepoys are to assist in working the Ship below, in hauling up and paying down cables, in hoisting in and out Boats, Water and Provisions, in short in manning the Tackle Falls on all occasions.

“2nd. They are to draw and hand along water for the purpose of washing the Ship, and are personally to clean out their own berths.

“3rd. They are not to wash their Clothes, but upon days specially appointed by the Regulations of the Ships.

“4th. They are not to be compelled to go aloft, to scrub the decks, or perform any menial office.

“5th. In case of misconduct, a Non-Commissioned Officer to be confined, and (if the Havildar) a Naique, or (if the Naique) a Private is to be selected to perform his duty till he can be tried, or upon due sense of his misconduct, it shall be deemed proper to release him.

“6th. In no case is a Non-Commissioned Officer to be struck, or to have Corporal Punishment.

“7th. Privates are, for crimes of a serious nature, to be confined till they can be brought to trial, but for offences of less importance, when absent from the Presidency and the support of discipline requires immediate punishment, they are to be punished with a ‘Rattan,’ according to the degree of the offence, by the Drummer or Fifer, in presence of the Detachment, to whom the cause of the Punishment is to be clearly explained, or for misconduct not demanding Corporal Punishment, they may have allotted to them the task of picking Oakum, or knotting yarns, while their Comrades are relieved from Duty.”

In January, 1818, the Battalion was formed into a regular regiment of the line and denominated the 11th Regiment Native Infantry, of which the 1st Battalion consisted of the former Marine Battalion, and the 2nd Battalion was raised by transferring

200 privates and a proportion of other ranks from the 1st Battalion and by drafts from other Bombay Regiments.

The 1st Battalion was called the 1st (or Marine) Battalion, 11th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry, but the 2nd Battalion was not a Marine Battalion.

In 1820, the 1st (or Marine) Battalion, 11th N.I., furnished a draft of four Native Officers and 231 Rank and File as a basis for the 2nd Battalion,* 12th Regiment, which was ordered to perform the same duties as the Marine Battalion, but in 1823 the 2nd Battalion, 12th N.I., was ordered to cease to be a Marine Battalion, and all men in it having special qualifications for duty on board ship were transferred back to the 1st (or Marine Battalion), 11th Bombay Native Infantry, which was augmented to a strength of 1,000 privates.

When the system of regiments of two battalions was discontinued in 1824, the Battalion became the 21st or Marine Battalion, and later in the same year it was again designated simply The Marine Battalion, and it was ordered that it was again to be commanded by a Major or Captain. Another unit (the 2nd Extra Battalion) was given the name of the 21st Regiment of Bombay, N.I., but later was disbanded.

The battalion continued to be called The Marine Battalion until 1861, when it was again brought into the line and designated the 21st Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry (The Marine Battalion).

From the time it was raised until, having been converted into a Pioneer battalion, it was moved to Poona in 1904,—a period of 127 years—the Headquarters of The Marine Battalion was continuously stationed in Bombay.

In 1796 the Battalion marched to Colaba (which is that part of Bombay where the barracks of the British Infantry and the Royal Artillery are now situated), and took possession of the new cantonment which had been built for it there.

* Now 1st Battalion 10th Baluch. Regiment.

These "Lines" were destroyed by fire in 1812, and the barracks were again burnt down in 1820, and replaced by huts which were for the third time accidentally completely destroyed by fire in 1829, and nearly all the men's clothing, including their new jackets, and private property was lost in the fire.

In the course of a few months permanent barracks were erected for the Battalion on the site ever since known in Bombay as the Marine Lines.

When the fine old Indian Navy was abolished,* in 1863, the Marine Battalion continued to be stationed in Bombay, and became a localised battalion of Native Infantry, and the history of this period is somewhat uneventful, until in 1903 it was converted into the 121st Pioneers and delocalised.

107TH PIONEERS

Up to the year 1768 the organization of the Honourable East India Company's native troops in Bombay had been by companies, known by the names of the officers commanding them.

In this year orders were issued for the formation of these companies into two battalions, which were named the 1st and 2nd Battalions of Bombay Sepoys. A number of other battalions were raised from time to time, until, in 1780, there were fifteen battalions, exclusive of the Marine Battalion, in the Bombay Army.

The training of these early battalions of Bombay Sepoys is thus described by one of their British† Officers:—"Our most important occupation consisted in bringing into passable parade order our gallant and faithful battalion. It must be remembered that at this period we possessed no established order of discipline

* In 1863 the Indian Navy ceased to exist as a combatant naval service, but it carried on as the Indian Marine (later Royal Indian Marine), its duties being limited to transport work, station duties at the ports and marine surveying. It rendered valuable services during the Great War, and in 1934 again became a combatant service with the title of the Royal Indian Navy.

† "Memoirs of a Field Officer."

to which to refer, our only system being that which existed separately in the breast of the separate commandants of battalions, who exercised their separate corps at discretion, regardless of all uniformity of movement. The quality of our Sepoys was, however, excellent, and the precision of their ball practice was such as to merit general approbation. We had not then, as afterwards, the example of that uniformity of manœuvre exhibited for our imitation by His Majesty's troops, to whom I shall always ascribe that advance towards perfection in discipline to which many of our native regiments have subsequently attained."

In 1784 the Bombay Native Army was reorganized and formed into eight battalions, plus the Grenadier and the Marine Battalions, and every effort was made to restore its efficiency, which had suffered severely in the disastrous campaign of 1783.*

Two of these eight battalions were shortly after disbanded, when it was soon found that this small force was scarcely sufficient for ordinary garrison work, and the signs that the peace concluded with Tippoo Sahib in 1784 would not last much longer, made it necessary again to increase the strength of the Bombay Army.

Under the new organization, the existing seven battalions were formed into twelve battalions, the Marine Battalion being left alone. The old 2nd and 6th Battalions were put together and then separated into five portions, as a foundation for the new 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 6th Battalions.

Of these new battalions, formed in 1788, the 4th Battalion of Bombay Sepoys was the unit which eventually became the 107th Pioneers; and it can thus claim descent from the original 2nd Battalion of Bombay Sepoys, raised in 1768.

The following are the names of the British Officers posted to the 4th Battalion in 1788 :—

* *Vide* page 32.

Captain* James Valentine.
Lieutenant Robert Nesbitt.
Lieutenant Robert Buchanan.
Lieutenant J. W. Troy.
Lieutenant Charles Davis.
Lieutenant Harry Waters.
Lieutenant Thomas Field.
Lieutenant C. J. Mears.
Lieutenant Robert Rea.

In the manuscript Records of the Battalion against this year, 1788, a General Order is referred to, which seems worthy of reproduction here. The entry reads :—

“ With a view to increasing the Musketry efficiency of the Army it was ordered that ‘ every soldier in the Army is to fire a ball at a mark once a week without wasting ammunition. This will keep them in a constant habit and make it familiar to them.’ ”

The Battalion remained in Bombay till the next year, when it embarked for Surat, and in 1790 it returned to Bombay (which is always referred to in the Records of this time as “ the Presidency, ”) and was quartered in the Fort, and in the following year it embarked for Tellicherry for field service in Mysore.†

In 1796 the Bombay Army was again reorganized and formed into four regiments, each of two battalions, when a battalion was made up from the whole of the 4th Battalion of Bombay Sepoys and the left wing of the 8th Battalion, as follows :—

“ The entire of the old 4th Battalion as seven companies (two grenadier and five battalion companies) with four companies of the old 8th Battalion as three battalion companies, making ten complete companies.”

The unit was called the 1st Battalion 4th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry.

This system of regiments each of two battalions was discontinued in 1824, the battalions being disconnected and renumbered. The 1st Battalion 4th Regiment

* Until 1796 Bombay battalions were commanded by captains, *vide* establishments given in Appendix 2.

† See Ch. III.

then became the 7th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry.

The name of the Battalion was afterwards slightly altered at various times, as shewn in the Table, until in June, 1900, whilst it was stationed at Fort Pishin, near Quetta, orders were received for its conversion into Pioneers, with the name of the 7th Bombay Infantry (Pioneers). In 1903 it became the 107th Pioneers.

12TH PIONEERS (THE KELAT-I-GHILZIE* REGIMENT)

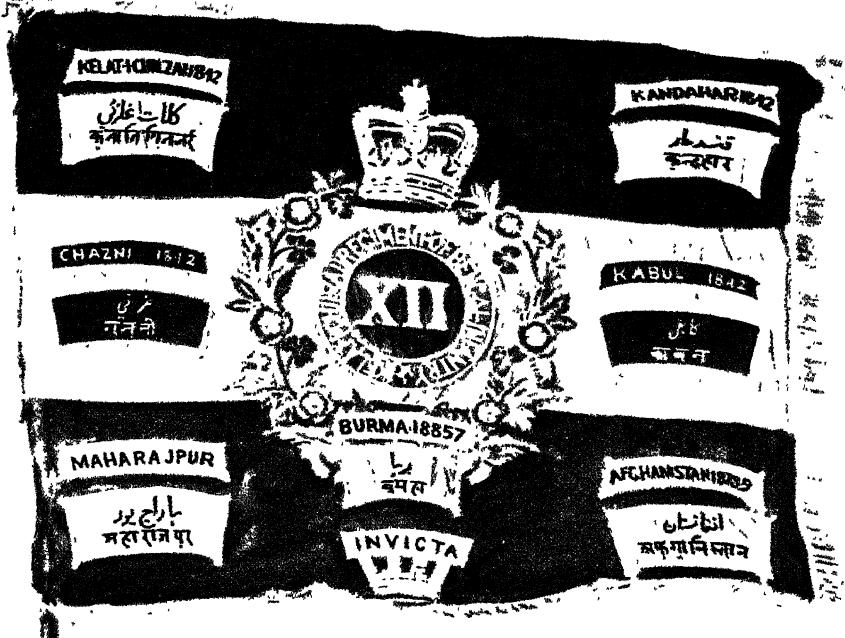
In 1838, the internal troubles in Afghanistan, the fear of the spread of Russian influence in that country, and a threat of an invasion by Persia, determined the British Government to establish as Amir of Kabul, a nominee of its own, Shuja-ul-Mulk, who for nearly thirty years had been living as a refugee at Ludhiana.

An attempt to give a popular character to the claims of Shah Shuja was made by the announcement that he would enter Afghanistan surrounded by his own troops. In reality these troops were merely a small contingent—one troop of Horse Artillery, two regiments of cavalry and six regiments of infantry—of Hindustani troops, which were raised in 1838 by the Indian Government on behalf of Shah Shuja.

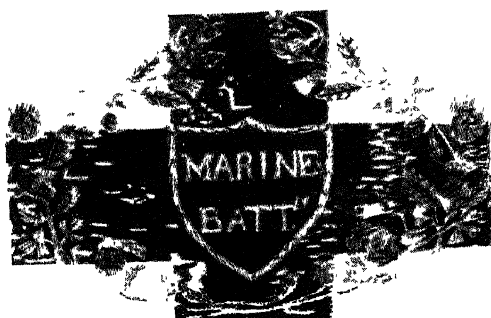
One of the six battalions of this force was called the 3rd Regiment of Infantry of Shah Shuja's Contingent, and it was embodied at Ludhiana in August, 1838, by Capt. W. F. Beatson. This officer had already gained some distinction whilst serving with the British Legion in Spain, under Sir De Lacey Evans, during the Carlist and Cristino War.

Capt. Beatson was, however, soon transferred to another appointment, and on the 18th October,

* The spelling of "Kelat-i-Ghilzie" has varied from time to time. Formerly "Ghilzai," it was ordered to be spelt "Ghilzie" by A.D. No. 1079 in the "Gazette of India," dated 25th February, 1911. "Khilat," "Kilat," and "Kelat" have been used and in 1842 appeared "Kelaut-i-Ghilje."



THE KELAT-I-GHILZIE COLOUR.



A FRAGMENT OF AN OLD COLOUR OF
THE MARINE BATTALION.

Captain J. H. Craigie, of the 20th Bengal Infantry, was appointed Commandant in his place.

Only two British Officers were at first posted to each battalion of Shah Shuja's Force, the other appointed to the 3rd Infantry being Lieutenant R. McKean, of the 7th Bengal Infantry.

The 3rd Regiment so distinguished itself in the *1st Afghan War, that at the close of the operations when the rest of Shah Shuja's Force was dispersed, it was incorporated into the Bengal Army, under a General Order, dated 4th October, 1842, which reads as follows :—

“The regiment of Bengal irregular infantry, lately known as the 3rd regiment of Infantry, in the service of Shah Shuja, shall in consequence of the valour, discipline and fortitude manifested by that regiment on many occasions, and especially in the defence of Kelat-i-Ghilzie, continue embodied under its present commandant, Captain J. H. Craigie, and be brought on the strength of the Bengal Army as an extra regiment, and be denominated the “Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie.”

“To every officer, non-commissioned officer and private present within Kelat-i-Ghilzie, and forming part of the garrison thereof, during the late investment and blockade of that fort, will be presented a silver medal bearing a mural crown with the superscription of “Kelat-i-Ghilzie,” and on the reverse the word :—

“Invicta”

1842.

“The regimental Colour of the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie will be composed of the three colours of the military ribbon of India, and in the centre thereof will be inscribed the word ‘Kelat-i-Ghilzie.’”

The regiment was now organized in accordance with the rules for irregular regiments of infantry, that is to say, of the following strength :—

* *Vide* Chapter V.

1 Commandant.	40 Havildars.
1 Second-in-command.	40 Naiks.
1 Adjutant.	1 Sergeant-Major.
1 Quartermaster.	1 Quartermaster-Sergt.
8 Subadars.	16 Drummers.
8 Jemadars.	800 Sepoys.

Subsequently were added to the establishment :—

2 Native Doctors.	20 Naiks.
2 Jemadars.	and 200 Sepoys.
20 Havildars.	

The British Officers appointed to the Regiment on its transfer to the Bengal Army were :—

Major J. H. Craigie, C.B.,	20th Bengal Infantry.
Captain R. McKean,	17th Bengal Infantry.
Captain D. Gaussen,	42nd Bengal Infantry.
Lieutenant C. M. Sneyd,	27th Bengal Infantry.
Assistant-Surgeon Elderton.	

When the Bengal Army was reorganized after the Mutiny, the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie was brought into the Line of the Bengal Army on the 3rd May, 1861, and was numbered the 13th; in October of the same year this numbering was altered and it became the 12th* Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry; (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) being added after the number in 1864.

Subsequently its name was slightly altered on several occasions as shewn in the Table, until on the 3rd March, 1903, it was reconstituted as Pioneers and became the 12th Bengal Pioneers. On the 31st July of the same year its name was again changed to the 12th Pioneers (The Kelat-i-Ghilzie Regiment).

128TH PIONEERS

As Bengal troops had objected to serve without extra batta in the newly-conquered territory of Sind,

* The former 12th Regiment of Bengal N.I. was raised in 1763. Its right wing mutinied at Nowgong, and its left wing at Jhansi in 1857, and during the following year the regiment was wiped out.

one battalion going to the verge of mutiny on its march there, it was decided to provide this garrison from the Bombay Army. This made it necessary to increase the number of Bombay troops.

On the 21st January, 1846, orders were issued directing that "immediate measures be adopted for raising three regiments of Bombay Native Infantry of the line, in addition to the existing twenty-six regiments."

Of these, the one to be named the 28th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry was organized at Ahmednagar and the following British Officers were posted to it :—

Colonel R. Taylor.	Lieut.	G. L. Lye.
Lt.-Col. M. Soppitt.	"	C. Hodgkinson.
Major H. Lyons.	"	E. Campbell.
Captain A. N. Maclean.	"	G. J. Sheppard.
" W. S. Adam.	"	J. D. Williams.
" J. Holland.	"	J. T. James.
" D. C. Graham.	"	J. Malcolm.
" J. Ramsay.	"	J. Bromby.
" H. E. D. Jones.	Ensign	T. S. Hewett.
Lieut. W. R. Simpson.	"	T. J. Heyman.
" W. J. Arrow.	"	W. C. Stileman.

The Regiment was at first organized with one grenadier company, one light company and eight battalion companies.

The early Records of this Regiment give many details about various inspections, of which the following account of one held in 1850 is a typical example :—

"Brigadier-General Soppitt took the Review of the Regiment in the following manner :—The Regiment was inspected in heavy marching order on the general parade ground at half past six o'clock in the morning. The Brigadier stated that the pouches required polishing and were not so clean as they ought to be. It was explained by the Commanding Officer that the Parade was far from the Lines, a high wind blowing and the road very dusty.

"The next morning the Regiment paraded for Ball Practice on the beach at a quarter before six o'clock in the morning, each man fired three rounds, one round with fixed bayonets at 80 yards, two rounds, unfixed bayonets, at 100 and 120 yards. Afterwards the Brigadier saw the whole of the European and Native Officers, the Drummers, Fifers and Band perform the Sword Exercise, subsequent to which the Lines and Hospital were inspected and all the Books examined at the Mess.

"Brigadier Soppitt saw the Regiment in Review Order at half past four o'clock in the afternoon, and expressed himself very well pleased at the way in which the manœuvres were performed."

Orders were received, on the 1st March, 1888, sanctioning the conversion of the Regiment into a Pioneer Corps, under the name of the 28th (Pioneer) Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry. The Regiment thus became the first Pioneer Battalion in the Bombay Army, and in order to study the equipment and work of Pioneers, Lt.-Colonel R. Westmacott,* the Commandant, and his Quartermaster, Lieut. D. B. Thomson, visited the 1st and the 4th Regiments of Madras Native Infantry (Pioneers) at Bangalore and Trichinopoly, respectively.

At this time, 1888, the Regiment was stationed at New Jhansi (since known as East Kirkee) which is a part of Poona. They had arrived there in March, the previous year, and were under canvas until they had constructed "Kutchia Lines" of huts for themselves, on the site of what are now called "Westmacott Lines."

The other variations in the name of the Regiment, from time to time, are best seen in the Table.

48TH PIONEERS

The raising of this battalion was commenced at

* Later Major-General Sir Richard Westmacott, K.C.B., D.S.O.

Lucknow* in March, 1901, under the designation of the 48th Regiment of Bengal Infantry (Pioneers), which in the same year was altered to 48th Bengal Pioneers.

This was the only one of the five battalions which was raised as Pioneers.

Lt.-Colonel C. Le G. Justice was appointed its first Commandant, the Adjutant being Lieut. J. L. Dougherty, the Quartermaster, Lieut. C. W. Neumann and its first Subadar-Major being Mehtab Singh, Bahadur.

Each Double Company commander was entrusted with the raising of his Double Company, the British Officers being :—

No. I Double Company Major W. A. Cuppage.
2nd Lieut. G. Hewett.

No. II Double Company Major A. J. Shaw.
Lieut. H. J. Riddell.

No. III Double Company Captain A. J. N. Harward.
Lieut. M. E. S. Johnson.

No. IV Double Company Captain F. A. Andrew.

The battalion was complete by January, 1902, and in October it marched to Rurki, where it underwent five months' training in Field Engineering, with the assistance of the 1st Prince of Wales's Own Sappers and Miners.

In 1903 it became the 48th Pioneers.

LINKING OF THE BATTALIONS AND GROUPING INTO THE 2ND BOMBAY PIONEERS

On becoming Pioneers, the two Bengal battalions became "linked" with their Regimental Centre at Bareilly; similarly the three Bombay battalions were

* There happened to be vacant Lines at Lucknow, and it was not realized till later that it was at this place that the original 48th Regiment of Bengal N.I. (raised in 1804) had mutinied in 1857. A band of about ninety men of the old 48th remained loyal and, together with the faithful remnants of the 13th and 71st Regiments of Bengal N.I., formed part of the garrison of the Residency at Lucknow throughout the siege. After the mutiny the faithful sepoy of these three regiments were formed into "The Regiment of Lucknow," now called the 10th Battalion 7th Rajput Regiment.

“linked”* with Kirkee as their Regimental Centre.

This “linking” implied that reservists were trained at the Regimental Centre, under officers sent from each battalion of the “link,” and the battalions so “linked” regarded themselves as somewhat in the same relationship as battalions of a regiment.

On mobilization, each battalion left its Depôt behind, but there was no organization linking up these separate Depôts.

In 1922 all battalions, other than Gurkha Rifles, of the Indian Army were reorganized into Groups and renamed. Each Group (or Regiment) consisted of several Active Battalions and one Training Battalion, which in every Regiment was called the 10th Battalion.

Under this scheme the Pioneer battalions which at one time belonged to the old Bengal and Bombay Armies were grouped into a Regiment named the 2nd Bombay Pioneers, of which the battalions were formed as follows :—

107th Pioneers became the 1st Battalion,		
		2nd Bombay Pioneers.
12th Pioneers	„	2nd Battalion
		(Kelat-i-Ghilzie) „
128th Pioneers	„	3rd Battalion „
48th Pioneers	„	4th Battalion „
121st Pioneers	„	10th Battalion „
		(Marine Battalion).

The 10th Battalion (Marine Battalion) on becoming the Training Battalion of the 2nd Bombay Pioneers was ordered to be permanently stationed at Agra. Its personnel was distributed amongst the active battalions, any surplus being mustered out, and in its place each active battalion sent officers and men to form a training company for their battalion with the 10th Battalion.

The Training Battalion took over recruiting and the training of recruits for the whole Regiment. In case of mobilization, active battalions were to send certain

* In 1886 the 7th Bo. I. had been linked with the 24th and 26th Bo. I. till they became Baluchistan Regts., and in 1893 the 12th Bengal Inf. had been linked with the 5th.



MAJOR-GENERAL SIR RICHARD WESTMACOTT, K.C.B., D.S.O.

personnel, all documents and things left behind to the T.B., which would do all the duties hitherto performed by the Depôts.

DISBANDMENT OF THE 4TH BATTALION.

In 1926 the 4th Battalion, 2nd Bombay Pioneers (late 48th Pioneers) was disbanded. The circumstances which necessitated this step were that the overseas garrisons, which were a charge against the Imperial Government, had been reduced, and units which had in consequence returned to India were then a charge against the Indian revenues, which could not bear the cost.

The reasons for the 4th Battalion being chosen for disbandment were that it was the youngest of the Bombay Pioneer battalions and was returning from Iraq on reduction of the garrison there. At this time it was under the command of Lt.-Colonel G. E. P. Davis, O.B.E., and its disbandment was completed at Agra by the 20th December, 1926.

A number of Indian Officers, N.C.O.s and men of the 4th Battalion, instead of being discharged, were transferred to the other battalions, which kept within establishment by mustering out some of their own personnel. In this way the disbandment of the 4th Battalion was shared by the whole Regiment. Some of the British Officers from the 4th Battalion transferred to the other battalions of the Bombay Pioneers, several going to the Hazara Pioneers and to other units and branches of the service.

At the time of its abolition it was a splendid battalion in a high state of efficiency, and during the quarter of a century of its existence it had made its mark as a first class fighting unit.

THE CORPS OF BOMBAY PIONEERS

The manner in which the Corps was formed by fusing all the battalions of the 2nd Bombay Pioneers is described at the beginning of this chapter. The

actual Order* sanctioning this drastic reorganization into a Corps, which was fated to last for barely four years and lead to the total disbandment of all Indian Pioneers, reads (regarding the Bombay Pioneers) as follows :—

“ His Majesty the King-Emperor has been graciously pleased to approve the adoption from April 1st, 1929, of the new titles indicated below, consequent on the reorganization of Indian Pioneer units.

Indian Pioneer Units.

Present designation. * * * *	New title and composition. * * * * *
1st Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers.	THE CORPS OF BOMBAY PIONEERS. Corps Headquarters. 1st (Marine) Battalion. 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion.”
2nd Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers. (Kelat-i-Ghilzie).	
3rd Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers.	
10th Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers. (Marine Battalion).	

When the reorganization was ordered the 1st Battalion 2nd Bombay Pioneers was stationed at Kirkee, the 2nd Battalion at Nowshera, the 3rd at Meerut and the 10th at Agra.

At a conference of Commanding Officers held at Agra to arrange the reorganization, it was decided that in order to dispel any question of the disbandment of any one battalion and to effect the fusion of the existing battalions to form the new Corps Headquarters and two active battalions, each battalion should provide an equal quota of the classes enlisted to each of the new formations.

The remaining Indian Officers and men to the number of approximately one third of the total strength of all battalions of the 2nd Bombay Pioneers had to be mustered out.

The British Officers were distributed similarly so that each of the new units obtained an equal proportion of Officers from each old unit, except for fifteen of them who were transferred voluntarily to other branches of the service, mostly to Infantry.

* “ Gazette of India,” No. 308 of 1929.

The Corps Headquarters (which was really a new designation for a Training Battalion) was formed at Agra, the 1st (Marine) Battalion at Kirkee, and the 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion at Nowshera.

His Excellency the Commander-in-Chief in India, Field Marshal Sir William Birdwood, Bart., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., K.C.S.I., C.I.E., D.S.O., made the following speech, on the occasion of a review at Meerut:—

“Colonel Gray, Officers and men of the 2nd Bombay Pioneers,—I have much pleasure in attending your farewell parade as the 3rd Battalion 2nd Bombay Pioneers. I am fully aware of the excellent work your Battalion, as the 28th Bombay Pioneers and the 128th Pioneers has rendered during the eighty or more years since it was raised. You are fully aware that owing to the advancement of the science of war, the reorganization of our Army is of vital importance. As regards Pioneers the battalion system has not been approved for modern requirements, and it has therefore been decided to form self-contained companies, which will give better results in war. I am confident that as part of the Corps of Bombay Pioneers the late 128th Pioneers will play its part as it has done in the past. I wish you all the best of fortune and prosperity under the new organization.”

Four years later, at the time of the total disbandment of all Pioneers, the Corps Headquarters, Bombay Pioneers, and the 2nd (K.I.G.) Battalion were stationed in Westmacott Lines at Kirkee (where additional barracks had been built to make the permanent Headquarters of the Corps) and the 1st (Marine) Battalion was at Nowshera.

CHAPTER III

1777—1799

“ MYSORE ” “ SEEDASEER ” “ SERINGAPATAM ”

THE possessions of the Honourable East India Company in Western India in 1777, when this story starts, consisted only of the small island of Bombay, with the neighbouring island of Salsette, and the older settlement at Surat. Bombay was completely separated, except by the sea route, from the Company's larger possessions in Bengal and on the Eastern coast, the voyage along the coast being a dangerous one, owing to the piratical craft which infested the coast between Bombay and Vangorla, and the Mahratta fleet in the harbour of Gheria.

In 1778 an expedition despatched by the Bombay Government towards Poona, to intervene in a Mahratta dispute about who should be Peshwa, ended in ignominious failure and involved Bombay in war with the Mahrattas.

The early services of the Marine Battalion were performed by numerous detachments serving as marines on board the ships of the Bombay Marine and occasionally by larger detachments of one or more companies which formed part of various expeditionary forces. A detachment of the Marine Battalion on board a Company's cruiser usually consisted of a Havildar and from 12 to 15 men, who, whilst at sea, were directly under the command of the officers of the Bombay Marine (or Indian Navy), though sometimes larger parties, under Indian officers, were employed. The Headquarters of the Battalion remained in Bombay and the Marine Battalion did not go on field

service as a complete battalion until they became Pioneers.

The first active service it took part in was in 1779, when France, the Mahrattas and Mysore were at war with Great Britain, against the Mysorean troops on the Malabar coast, which were under the command of Sirdar Khan, an officer in the service of Hyder Ali, Sultan of Mysore.

In this campaign, detachments of the Marine Battalion on board the vessels "Durruck," "Eagle," "Manchester," "Bombay Grab" and the Pattamar Boats, then off the Malabar coast, were landed at Tellicherry and joined the British Detachment commanded by Captain Jameson. After landing at Tellicherry, the French settlement at Mahé was attacked, over which place flew both the French colours and those of Hyder Ali, which were both hauled down on the surrender of the fort to the British.

The Marine Battalion suffered a number of casualties on this service and the first Indian Officer to be named in the Battalion Records was *Jemadar Sheik Nathoo, who was wounded by a musket ball in the thigh. These detachments were afterwards employed on board their respective vessels in preventing the escape of merchants with goods down the creek of Calicut, during the time the British troops were besieging that fort.

In 1780, two ships of the Bombay Marine, with detachments of the Marine Battalion on board, were attached to the squadron of the Royal Navy under Sir E. Hughes, during the engagement with some ships flying Hyder Ali's flag, in the roadstead of Mangalore, the principal seaport of Mysore.

Two of the enemy's ships, each of twenty-six guns, were taken and burnt, a ketch of twelve guns was blown up by the enemy just as it was about to be

* When the rank of Subadar-Major was introduced in the Bombay Army, under orders dated 25th November, 1818, this I.O. was appointed the first Subadar-Major of the Marine Battalion, "on account of his long and faithful service." He was pensioned on Rs. 67 per month in February, 1820.

boarded, several ships were driven ashore and only one Grab escaped into the harbour.

Men of the Marine Battalion were also on board the Bombay ships which escorted General Matthews, the Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, and the force under his command, which sailed from Bombay in 1782 and obtained possession of the coastal forts of *Rajaman Droog, Honowar and Coondapoor.

This expedition at first met with great success and captured the rich town of Bednore, but later in 1783, the army having been dispersed in detachments "occupying almost every town and mud fort in the country" suffered severe reverses when Tippoo Sahib, the new Sultan of Mysore, arrived on the scene with his army from the Carnatic. Bednore was retaken and General Matthews himself, with a great part of his army, was captured and marched off in irons to a miserable imprisonment, during which the General and some other officers were murdered.

Amongst these prisoners was William Williamson, who was wounded at Bednore and released at the peace of 1784. This officer commanded the Marine Battalion as a Captain and as a Major, and later in 1802 was appointed its first commandant† with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

After capturing the British army at Bednore, Tippoo marched on Mangalore, to which port the remnants of the British forces from various small posts had retreated. In a list of the garrison of Mangalore, dated a few days before the siege commenced, is entered "100 men of the Marine Battalion," and a guard of the Marine Battalion is referred to in the embarkation orders after the capitulation, so it is probable‡ that this detachment served through the eight months siege of Mangalore. A number of sepoys,

* *Vide* Map No. 1.

† *Vide* page 14.

‡ Unfortunately no entries have been made in the manuscript "Digest of Services of the Marine Battalion" against the years 1781 to 1784, both inclusive.



SERINGAPATAM. 4th May, 1799.

who had escaped from Bednore and from other garrisons captured by the Mysorean troops were formed into a battalion of detachments, commanded by Arthur Disney, formed part of the garrison. Disney had been Adjutant of the Marine Battalion in 1781 and subsequently he commanded the 1st Battalion 4th Native Infantry (later 107th Pioneers). The siege of Mangalore commenced on the 16th May, 1783, and was conducted with energy. Several assaults were successfully repulsed, but the garrison lost heavily in battle casualties and from disease, and at last they were reduced to eating snakes, frogs, dogs and vermin. On the 23rd January, 1784, Mangalore was surrendered to the enemy on honourable terms, which allowed the garrison to retain their arms and to be withdrawn to Tellicherry on ships provided by Tippoo Sultan.

In 1783 the "Ranger," a Company's brig of twelve guns, with a detachment of the Marine Battalion on board, was proceeding from Bombay to the Malabar coast for the purpose of conveying some military officers to the Army in the Bednore country, including General McLeod, who had been appointed to succeed the captured General Matthews in command of the troops, when it was attacked by a Mahratta fleet consisting of two ships, one ketch and eight gali-vats, under the command of the Peshwa's admiral, Anundrao Dhoolap.

The commander of the "Ranger," Lieut. Pruen of the Bombay Marine, on seeing the approach of the Mahratta fleet was delighted to have an opportunity of showing the King's officers on board how a Company's cruiser could fight.

A desperate action ensued. First the large ships plied the little brig with their guns, to which she replied with spirit, and then the galivats were laid alongside and it was sought to overwhelm the handful of sailors, marines and the military passengers by throwing on her decks as many boarders as could find foot-room. Though the enemy mustered fifteen to one, and the Mahrattas were renowned throughout

India as swordsmen, repeated attempts were repulsed. Numbers, however, told in the end, and at length the little craft was carried by an united rush of hundreds of men infuriated by the prolonged resistance.

Almost every officer and man in the "Ranger" was either killed or wounded, including General McLeod severely wounded. The prize was then taken into Gheria, where it was found that a treaty had already been signed between the British and the Mahrattas, and the vessel and prisoners were therefore handed back.

A period of peace with France, Mysore and the Mahrattas now ensued, until Tippoo's invasion and devastation of Travancore in 1790 caused the British again to open hostilities against him, this time with the Mahrattas as allies of the British. Cannanore and other places were captured with little resistance and the British again became masters of the Malabar coast. The Hindu population welcomed the change from Tippoo's tyranny but the Moplahs remained hostile and adhered to their co-religionist, the Sultan.

Early in 1791 the Governor-General of India, Lord Cornwallis, led an army in person from Bangalore against Tippoo's stronghold of Seringapatam, whilst a small force of the Bombay army marched up the ghauts from Malabar to co-operate, but scarcity of provisions caused the withdrawal of both forces without having accomplished anything. The Bombay army had to bury or destroy all its guns and also lost a quantity of baggage during the retirement, owing to a breakdown of its transport. The supply and transport arrangements were then reorganized for another effort.

The 4th Battalion of Bombay Sepoys (later to be the 107th Pioneers), which had returned from Surat to Bombay in 1790, sailed thence in November, 1791, at a strength of ten companies, to take part in its first campaign, and joined the 2nd Brigade (Lt.-Colonel Peché commanding) of General Abercromby's army

at Tellicherry, for the renewal of the war against Tippoo.

The Battalion Records state that at the commencement of this campaign an attempt was made to reduce the number of the followers, who hampered the movements of the army, by inducing the Native Troops to leave their families behind them at Tellicherry and Cannanore. A system of family payments was instituted at these two places and an order was issued urging the sepoys to provide for their families in safety at the base. The results, however, did not justify the hopes that were entertained, and the army went forth but little less hampered than on previous occasions.

On the 5th December, 1791, the force marched, via Calliard, to the Pondacherrim Ghaut, which was reached on the 16th. After another three weeks of arduous labour, a battering train of fourteen guns was brought up to the top of the Ghaut, and all was ready to continue the march towards Seringapatam, to co-operate with the main army under Lord Cornwallis, advancing from the East.

On the 21st January, 1792, Lt.-Colonel Peché was directed to take command of the line of communications, and the 4th Battalion of Bombay Sepoys was detailed to guard the line. Split up in small detachments and harassed by perpetual convoy duty, the Battalion had hard and uninteresting work, until General Abercromby's force returned to the coast in April. Tippoo Sahib had come to terms with Lord Cornwallis, whose army had captured some of the out-works of Seringapatam, but had not been able to assault the fortress itself.

On the force being broken up, the 4th Battalion of Bombay Sepoys was reduced to a peace establishment of eight companies, and was stationed at Cercour, with detachments at Biliapatam, Cavai and Mount Dilly, and it remained on the Malabar coast until 1796, when at Chippulcherry it became the 1st Battalion 4th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry.

In 1797 a punitive expedition, under Colonel Dow, was organized against the Pyche Rajah, one of the petty Rajahs of the Malabar province who was keeping up a guerilla warfare against the Company's forces and refusing to pay the revenue taxes. As part of this expedition, two battalion* companies, of the 1st Battalion 4th N.I., under Captain Arthur Disney, marched on the 26th February, 1797, for the Nullumpur Ghaut, and on the 2nd March the 13th N.I., with two field guns and a "grasshopper," or mountain gun, marched up the Tambercherry Ghaut. These two columns then joined hands and held a position at the top of the Ellecherum Ghaut, to await the arrival of supplies from the coast. Colonel Dow returned to Mahé on the coast to hurry up the supply column, leaving Major Cameron, of the 13th N.I., in command. When his supplies were almost exhausted, Cameron decided that he must return to the coast.

The small force began its retirement at moonrise on the night of the 19th March, the two companies of the 1st Battalion 4th Regiment, under Disney, forming the advanced guard. After proceeding about four miles down the wooded Pass, the column was suddenly attacked by volleys of musket balls, stones and arrows, supported by the fire from some "gingals" or light guns. They had walked into a well prepared ambush. Disney and his two companies, being in advance and unimpeded by baggage, fought his way through the gorge out into the open country with small loss, the only casualty mentioned in the Battalion Records being Jemadar Augnac Laceri, wounded. The main body, under Cameron, however, suffered very severely and lost a Colour; Major Cameron and another British Officer of the 13th,† 3 British Sergeants, 7 Indian Officers, and 150 Rank and File, all being killed.

Disney halted at the foot of the Pass to cover the retirement until he was joined by the survivors of

* A regiment had two flank (or Grenadier) companies and eight battalion companies.

† Now the 2nd Battalion 4th Bombay Grenadiers.

Cameron's battalion, from whom he learnt of the disaster. They then continued the march and shortly met the supply column, escorted by the 3rd Native Infantry, coming out to them.

Fresh operations were soon undertaken against the Pyche Rajah, in which the 1st Battalion 4th Regiment were employed. The flank companies of the battalion were present at the storming of the Rajah's palace at Canoot, where Jemadar Assuf Khan was wounded, and at actions at Tamba Pagoda and Chunder Mell, amongst the wounded being Subadar Sheik Abdulla. The Pyche Rajah was forced to submit, though he soon again became rebellious.

England was now at war with the Dutch and in 1796 captured their settlements in Ceylon, which mostly surrendered without any resistance. Detachments of the Marine Battalion were on board the Honourable Company's ship "Bombay" and four smaller vessels during this service.

The following year H.M.S. "Resistance" and the "Bombay" anchored off Kupang, in Timor,* an important settlement of the Dutch. In answer to a summons to surrender, the Dutch Governor at once gave up the fort, which was occupied by marines from the ships. Three officers were appointed commissioners to take over the island and it was arranged to meet the Dutch delegates at the Council House near the fort.

Meanwhile a conspiracy had been formed by some Malay chiefs to murder the commissioners and seize the fort, and on the commission arriving at the Council House they found a large crowd of armed natives there. Suspecting foul play, the commissioners began to retreat towards the fort, when the signal was given for the massacre.

One of the commissioners was killed, one was hidden by an old woman, and the third managed to reach and cross the bridge of the fort, which was

* Timor is an island in the East India Archipelago, 260 miles off the N. coast of Australia.

held by a havildar and six men of the Marine Battalion. The pressure at the bridge was great, but the havildar and marines kept the crowd at bay, until the fort guns opened fire and quickly dispersed the dense mob, with severe loss. In this affair the havildar and two men were killed and the remaining four were wounded. Several men of the ships' crews, who were on shore in the bazaar, were murdered by the infuriated Malays.

On the 13th January, 1797, the armed boat "Vigilant" of six guns, whilst crossing the entrance of the Gulf of Kutch, was attacked by four sail of Sanganian pirates, each more than double the size of the "Vigilant" and carrying twice her number of men. The piratical craft boarded one on each quarter and on each bow, and for three hours the enemy's vessels were lashed alongside the "Vigilant," whilst the pirates made desperate efforts to board her. The long and protracted resistance was rewarded by success, and the pirates, casting off their lashings, sailed away.

The men of the Marine Battalion who fought in this action on the "Vigilant" were rewarded with a gratuity of one month's pay and Havildar Mandnac Esnac was promoted to Jemadar, two naiks to havildar and two sepoys to naik.

At this time the Persian Gulf was infested with pirates and the East India Company kept two or three of their ships of war in the Gulf for the protection of their commercial interests, especially of their Agencies at Bushire and Basra.

In 1797, the brig "Viper," of fourteen guns, was lying off Bushire, where were also some Joasmi dhows, who were then at war with the Imam of Muskat. No fear of any hostile movement on the part of these dhows existed, and they were supplied with powder and shot by the British. No sooner had they obtained sufficient for their purpose than they weighed anchor as if for a cruise.

It was about 8 o'clock in the morning, the Captain of the "Viper" being on shore with the Political



1ST BATTALION 4TH REGIMENT OF BOMBAY NATIVE INFANTRY.
1799.

HISTORY OF THE BOMBAY PIONEERS

Former officers of the regiment can obtain one free copy of this history on application to Lt. Col. W. B. P. TUGWELL, 44 Kimbolton Road, Bedford.

The book can be bought from The SIDNEY PRESS LTD., Bedford, for 10/6 post free in the U.K. (which is much under cost price.)

Presented to

With the compliments

of the

Officers formerly of

The Corps of Bombay Pioneers

Resident and the crew having their breakfast, when suddenly two of the dhows, which were passing under the "Viper's" stern, opened fire with round shot upon her.

The officers, who were below, rushed upon deck and called the men to quarters, and only just in time, for the dhows, crammed full of men, bore down on the little brig, intending to capture her by boarding. The crew of the "Viper" cut the cable and made sail on the ship, while the guns were cast loose and soon opened a well directed fire on their treacherous assailants. After a sharp fight the dhows were driven off and chased out to sea.

The young officer in command was killed and the senior midshipman, who took command on the death of his superior, fought the ship with determined bravery. The loss she incurred—thirty-two out of a total of sixty-five—testified to the severity of the action.

The Commander-in-Chief notified in General Orders, dated 21st January, 1798, the conduct of the detachment of the Marine Battalion, which served in the above action, in the following flattering terms :—

"The firmness and bravery evinced by the detachment of the Marine Battalion on duty on the "Viper" during the last trip up the Gulf of Persia, in defending the vessel, when attacked under circumstances of peculiar difficulty, are considered by the Government as highly meritorious, and the Commander-in-Chief has particular pleasure in conveying these sentiments to the detachment. The Board, ever happy to have it in their power to encourage fidelity and bravery by due notice thereof, have been pleased to direct that the notification of the high sense they entertain of such meritorious conduct, be accompanied by a gratuity of one month's full pay to the aforesaid Marine detachment, and by a present of a silver chain and badge of the value of one hundred rupees to Havildar Soubannac Wagnac. The badge to be engraved with the figure of a Ship with a Viper head, and inscribed with the words 'The Reward of Fidelity and Valour.'"

Shortly afterwards Jemadar Sheik Gunny received a similar reward for the same action.

Early in 1799 preparations were well advanced for the fresh campaign against Tippoo, Sultan of Mysore.

The "Grand Army," under the command of Lord Harris, moved westward from its base at Vellore on the 11th February, marching via Bangalore, with Seringapatam as its objective. This army was joined on the march by a force from Hyderabad, bringing its strength up to about 180,000, of which total no less than 150,000 were followers, and only some 31,000 combatants. It had an immense mass of transport animals and was reckoned to be the best equipped force ever seen in India, but it must have been very ponderous and unwieldy.

In addition a force of six thousand troops of the Bombay Army assembled at Cannanore on the Malabar coast, under the command of Lt.-General James Stuart, with orders to ascend the Ghauts into the province of Coorg.

The 1st Battalion 4th Bombay Native Infantry, which had moved in September, 1797, from Calicut to Cota Perambo, marched in January, 1799, to join General Stuart's force.

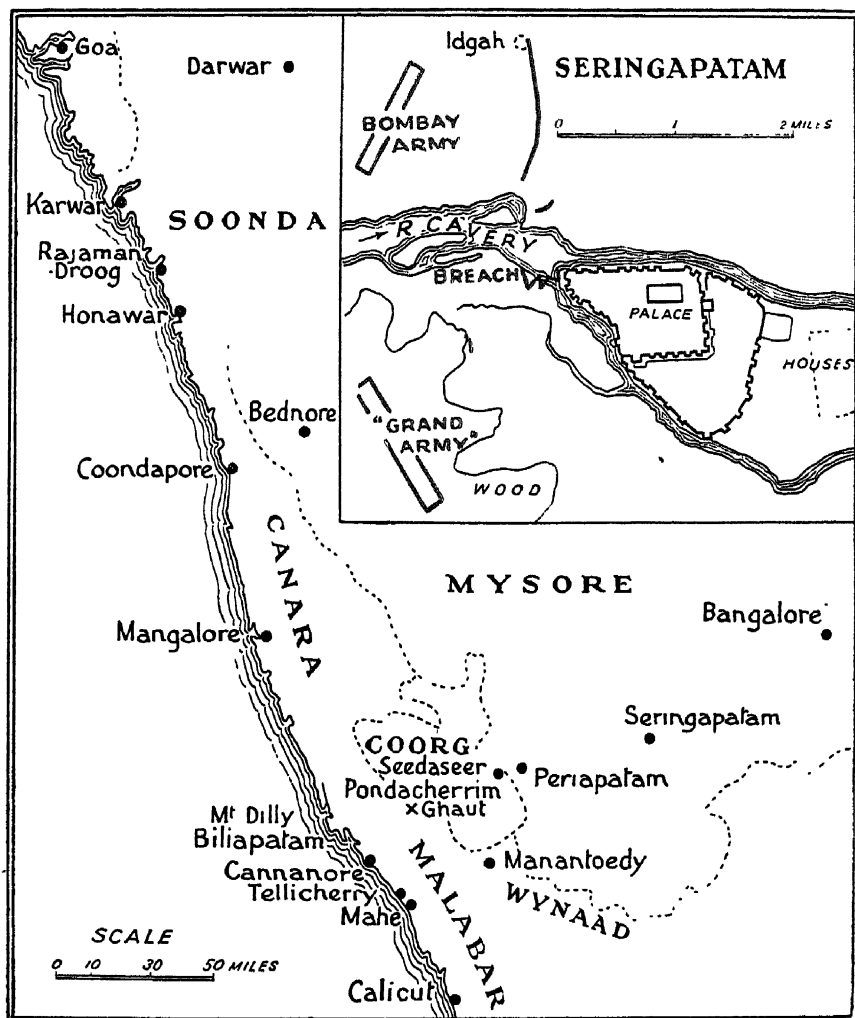
The Battalion was under the command of Major Arthur Disney and its strength on joining the force was 672.

For the first few weeks after its arrival at Cannanore the Battalion was employed in escorting stores up the Pandicherim Ghaut. The whole force marched on the 21st February and by the end of the month it had reached the Coorg-Mysore border, where it was to halt and await orders from Lord Harris.

The country was covered with dense forest and General Stuart found it necessary to distribute his force in three camps. On the 2nd March the Right Brigade of the force took up its position at Seedaseer on the boundary of Coorg and seven miles from the Mysorean fort of Periapatam. The rest of the force remained at Seedapore and Ahmootenoor, the former eight and the latter twelve miles from the advanced post at Seedaseer.

The 1st Battalion 4th Regiment was in the Right Brigade, which was commanded by Lt. - Colonel

SKETCH MAP OF THE
MALABAR COAST
1779 - 1804



Montresor, the other two battalions in the Brigade being the 1st Battalion 2nd Regiment and the 1st Battalion* 3rd Regiment Bombay Native Infantry, the total strength of the Brigade being under two thousand sepoys, with a few guns.

Tippoo Sahib had resolved on a bold stroke. He broadcast the news that he was about to march eastwards from Seringapatam against Lord Harris, whilst he secretly moved an army of eleven thousand eight hundred of his best troops under his personal command to Periapatam, with the intention of destroying the Bombay force. The plan was made feasible by the slow rate of march of the ponderous "Grand Army," which was still some distance to the East of Bangalore.

At 10 a.m. on the 5th March, a look-out party on a high hill at Seedaseer, from which a view is obtained almost to Seringapatam, observed that a camp of some 400 tents was being pitched on the West side of Periapatam. In the camp a large green tent was visible, such as the Sultan himself was wont to use, but intelligence received by General Stuart being that Tippoo had moved with his main army against Lord Harris, only one battalion (the 1st/5th)† was ordered to march at 5 p.m. that evening to reinforce the Right Brigade. It halted for the night some distance from Seedaseer.

Information came in early on the morning of the 6th March, that the Mysoreans had left their camp, though the direction of their march was unknown. Colonel Montresor, therefore, formed his Brigade in line, ready to meet a possible attack. He had posted five companies of the 1st/2nd with two guns some way down the road to keep open his communications. General Hartley (2nd in Command of the Bombay Force) was also at Seedaseer, and he despatched an officer to inform General Stuart that the enemy were attacking the advanced Brigade.

The enemy made a well-planned and well-executed

* Now the 1st and 2nd Battalions 5th Mahratta Light Infantry.

† Became the 4th Battalion 4th Bombay Grenadiers.

march in three columns by different routes and soon after 9 a.m., favoured by the dense jungle which grew close up to the Seedaseer position and by the thick morning haze, they came upon the front and rear of the line almost simultaneously, opening their attack with a discharge of rockets* and then pressing forward to within 20 to 30 paces of Montresor's bayonets. The sepoy battalions were thus completely surrounded and attacked from all sides by a greatly superior force.

Meanwhile the five companies, which had been posted to keep open the communications, were attacked by a strong column of the enemy. Taken by surprise and their commanding officer, Captain Stoll, being killed, this detachment was dispersed into the jungle and lost its two guns to the enemy. The battalion despatched by General Stuart as a reinforcement was also engaged and was unable to advance to Seedaseer.

The news of the attack reached General Stuart at Seedapore at about noon, and he at once led out the flank companies of H.M.'s 75th and the whole of H.M.'s 77th Regiment to march to the help of the Right Brigade.

All through the day Tippoo launched attacks against Montresor's position, but the little more than two Bombay battalions staunchly held their ground and firing with steadiness and precision repulsed all the enemy's efforts to overwhelm them. So sustained was the fighting, according to one account, that "several of the muskets having melted, burst in the muzzles and touch-holes from the heat of the firing."

It was nearly 3 p.m. when General Stuart's reinforcements arrived, threw off their knapsacks and launched a vigorous attack. By this time the ammunition of the Right Brigade was almost expended and the men much exhausted by their six hours of

* The rocket was an iron tube, filled like a sky-rocket, and fixed to a heavy bamboo about 4 ft. long, the head of which had an iron spike. The man who discharged it placed the butt-end on his foot, pointing the spiked end in direction of the target, and set fire to the fuze. The rocket flew with considerable velocity, and after striking the ground, bounded horizontally, often fracturing the legs of the enemy.

fighting, but the approach of assistance put new strength into them and took the heart out of the enemy. After about another half hour of fighting, the Mysorean force broke and retreated in all directions, having lost in all some fifteen hundred killed and wounded.

The casualties of Montresor's Brigade were 5 British Officers and 148 men killed, wounded and missing, of which the share of the 1st Battalion* 4th Regiment amounted to 53.

Lord Mornington, the Governor General, wrote of Seedaseer to the Directors of the East India Company as follows :—"I am confident that your honourable court will be of opinion that the conduct and success of the Army of Bombay on that day has seldom been equalled and never surpassed."

Tippoo Sahib, having collected his dispirited army at Periapatam, marched back to Seringapatam, where he made as much capital as he could of the dispersal of the detached five companies and wrote the following account of the battle :—

"On Wednesday, the 30th, or last day of the month of the year Shadeb, 1226, from the birth of Mohommed, corresponding with the 29th of Ramzan (when the moon is not visible), 1213 Hegira, or the 6th March, 1799, the victorious army of the Sultan having left their baggage at Periapatam, and formed themselves into three divisions, entered the woods of Coorg by three different roads, where the army of the Christians had taken post, and advancing, gave battle, fighting with firelocks and spears, and the whole army of the infidels was routed, some of the Christians taking to flight." This is followed by a list of his officers, who "devoted themselves and drank the cup of martyrdom."†

The "Grand Army" took up its position about two miles from the western face of the fortress of Seringapatam on the 5th April, and at dawn of the same day Lord Harris despatched a force under Major-General Floyd to open communication with General Stuart at Periapatam. The Bombay Army remained in Coorg territory until the 10th April, when it joined General

* In later years the 107th Pioneers kept an annual holiday on the 6th March in commemoration of Seedaseer.

† Translation of a paper in Tippoo's handwriting found in Seringapatam.

Floyd and the next day the two forces marched together for Seringapatam, where they arrived on the 14th, having been annoyed daily on the march by parties of Mysorean Horse, commanded by Kamir-ul-Din Khan.

On the 16th the Bombay Army crossed to the North of the Caverry river and took up its position for the siege with its right flank on the river and its left on some rocks near the ruins of the Idgah* redoubt.

The 1st Battalion 4th Regiment took part in attacks on some outworks of the fortress and in making a lodgment for the enfilading batteries of the Bombay Army. The battalion was in the trenches on the night of the 21st/22nd April, when, just before dawn, the enemy delivered an attack against the advanced posts of the Bombay Army, which was repulsed with loss; the French troops in Tippoo's employ led the attack and suffered severely.

A breach having been reported practicable, Lord Harris decided to deliver the assault on the 4th May.

The troops for the storm were told off into two parties, which were to enter the breach together and then turn, the one to the right the other to the left, as soon as they had mounted the rampart. As was the custom at the time the attacking columns were composed of companies detailed from many battalions, amongst them being a grenadier company of the 1st Battalion 4th Regiment Bombay N.I., which was allotted to the Right Column.

Both the flank companies of the Battalion were below strength, so the Commanding Officer joined them together and sent them as one company, under Captain Samuel Wallace, for this hazardous service.

The troops were in the trenches opposite the breach by daylight, having been sent there in small parties during the night, but thinking the enemy might least expect it at the hottest hour of a sweltering day, the assault was not delivered until one o'clock in the afternoon.

* *Vide* inset to Map No. 1.

On leaving the trenches the storming columns had to cross 100 yards of open ground to the bank of the river, which was 280 yards across, the water in its rocky bed varying from ankle to waist deep, then a low wall, a 60 yards wide ditch and finally the breach.

The troops rushed across this space under a hot fire of grape, musketry and rockets, and within six minutes the leading men had gained the top of the breach. A short distance from the breach a sally-port bridge was accidentally let down by the fire of our artillery, and a sharp* fight took place upon this bridge between a company of sepoys and a band of the Sultan's Guards, known as Hyder's Grenadiers. After reaching the top of the breach, the two columns commenced to fight their way along the ramparts to right and left, until they again met, having cleared and occupied the whole length of the walls. At first the enemy fought ferociously and bravely, but they became more and more demoralized until the fighting degenerated into little better than unresisted slaughter.

Within two hours the entire fortress had been secured and all fighting had ceased.

Although the British losses during the whole siege amounted to considerably more, in the actual storm there were only 317 British and 44 Indians killed and wounded. The 1st Battalion 4th Regiment lost 2 killed and 14 wounded.

The number of the Mysorean slain, amongst whom was the Sultan, was reckoned at 8,500.

So closed the campaign which had utterly broken the most formidable power in the South of India.

Shortly after the capture of Seringapatam, the Bombay Army returned to the Malabar coast and by the 5th June, 1799, the 1st Battalion 4th Bombay Native Infantry was again stationed at Cota Perambo.

The medals for Seringapatam were not received till the 26th October, 1812, when the battalion was

* The illustration of this incident is from one of the three engravings made in 1803, each of which represents one third of an enormous painting by R. K. Porter, which occupied 2,550 square feet of canvas, the figures in the foreground being life size.



THE HON'BLE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S MEDAL FOR SERINGAPATAM, 1799.
 MEDAL FOR KELAT-I-GHILZIE, 1842.

at Kaira, commanded by Captain Hull. Only medals for those still serving with the battalion, who had been at Seringapatam, appear to have been received, viz. :—

- 1 Silver medal for Ensign Hull.
- 8 Copper Bronzed medals for N.C.O.s.
- 86 "Pungrain" Tin medals for privates.

Whether medals were presented to men who had been discharged is not stated in the battalion records.

During this campaign detachments of the Marine Battalion were serving on the Honourable Company's ships off the Malabar coast and making many long and adventurous voyages on survey and other duties.

The treaty for the partition of Mysore was signed on the 22nd June, 1799, under which, amongst other provisions, the province of Canara passed to the East India Company and that of Soonda to the Mahrattas.

A brigade under Lt.-Colonel Wiseman was sent from Malabar to take over possession of Canara, and the 1st Battalion 4th Regiment Bombay N.I. joined this brigade on the 27th August; and after being at Mangalore it was detached to Bednore, where it arrived on the 1st October, relieving the 1st Battalion 8th Madras N.I.

Meanwhile Soonda, where there had been considerable trouble with the leader of a marauding band, named Doondia Wagh, had been withdrawn from the Mahrattas and allotted as part of the territory of the new five years old Rajah of Mysore, and the British troops were ordered to occupy it, the 1st Battalion 4th Regiment being sent to Hullial, which place they reached on the 11th January, 1800.

This must have been a fine station for any officers of the Battalion who were keen on "*shikar*," for Colonel the Hon. Arthur Wellesley, now in command of all troops above the Ghauts, wrote of Soonda :—
"There is little in it to govern, but trees and wild beasts."

CHAPTER IV

1800—1839

“PERSIAN GULF” “BENI-BOO-ALI” “BURMA” “ADEN”

THE 1st Battalion 4th Regiment Bombay Native Infantry next saw service in the first campaign fought by Arthur Wellesley in independent command.

Doondia Wao* had been a prisoner of Tippoo Sultan in Seringapatam, but having been released by the British at the capture of that place, he collected some of the disbanded Mysorean troops and set himself up as a successful and cruel freebooter.

Towards the end of 1799 he was driven out of the Bednore district and then out of Soonda, and it was imagined that the last had been heard of him.

However, he reappeared early in 1800 and soon had a numerous following, which increased like a rolling snow-ball as he moved about, until it amounted to forty thousand armed bandits. He obtained possession of some forts in the Mahratta country, South of Darwar, and of several in Soonda and proclaimed himself as ruler of a large tract of country, under the title of the King of the Two Worlds.

The Governor General, having first obtained permission for British troops to enter Mahratta territory, ordered his brother, Colonel the Hon. Arthur Wellesley, to hunt down Doondia Wao and to hang him on the nearest tree.

Whilst the main army was being concentrated at Chittledroog and during the opening phases of the

* Spelt “Wao” in Wellesley’s Despatches, but probably should be “Wagh,” the Mahratti word for “Tiger.”

campaign, the battalion—now commanded by Captain J. P. Dickinson—was employed in clearing the country around Hullial of bandits. It also captured the small fort of Budnaghur, in accordance with the following orders received by the Commanding Officer :

“ Chittledroog,
11th June, 1800.

Sir,

As I find that the party is still at Budnaghur, it is very desirable that you should make arrangements immediately for driving them out.

For this you will probably find your force sufficient, and as the distance is not greater than twenty miles, they may be able to march it in one night, and make the attack a surprise. Budnaghur is a small fort, having a tiled roof over its rampart.

As well as I recollect, it has no ditch; but if it has one, it will easily be passed, and the attacking party will have no difficulty in escalading the wall : for this purpose they must carry ladders.

Every man found in the fort must be put to death.

I have, etc.,

ARTHUR WELLESLEY.”

The main force—consisting of two British and three Indian cavalry regiments, two British and five Indian infantry battalions, with guns—advanced from Chittledroog on the 12th June. Several forts were captured and most of the garrisons put to the sword, but Doondia, with the bulk of his followers, wisely avoided being caught shut up in any fortified place.

The “ 1st of the 4th,” as Wellesley often called them, were still engaged in dealing with parties of bandits, and the following letter was despatched; although later, on the 1st July, Wellesley wrote to Colonel Stevenson that he did not yet know whether the battalion had marched from Hullial :

“ To the Officer Commanding
1st Battalion 4th Bombay Regiment.

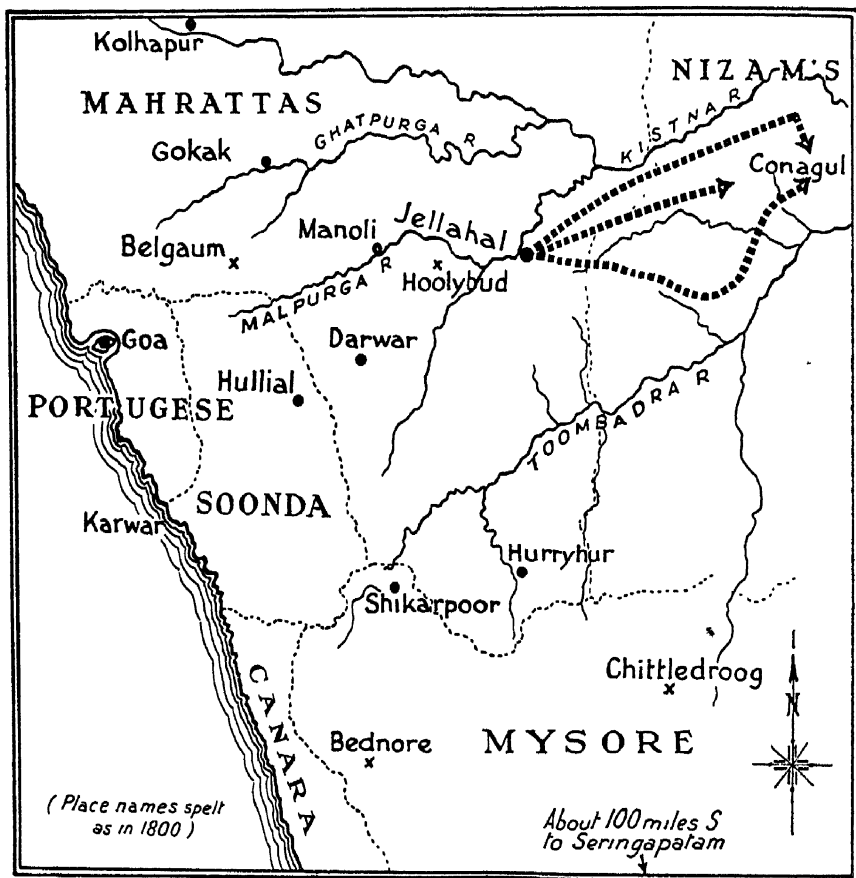
Camp opposite Hurryhur,
25th June, 1800.


Sir,

I have received information that a body of Doondia's cavalry is gone towards the frontier near Shikarpoor, with a view to interrupting your junction with me. I have sent a detachment against them under the orders of Colonel Stevenson, and I have desired that officer to write to you at Shikarpoor.

E

SKETCH MAP FOR WELLESLEY'S CAMPAIGN IN 1800.



Routes of columns after leaving Jellahal,
shewn thus 
Wellesley's being the most southern route.

Scale : 1 inch to 70 miles.

This letter is merely to put you on your guard, as I have no apprehension whatever for your safety, and I beg that you will proceed on your march as directed without loss of time.

I have the honour to be, etc.,

ARTHUR WELLESLEY."

Doondia scored a big success near Darwar, on the 30th June, by heavily defeating a Mahratta army, killing its commander Goklah, and capturing guns and munitions. The survivors of the discomfited Mahratta force fled to Hullial and took refuge under its walls. Doondia pursued them until he came under the fire of the 1st of the 4th, just outside that place, when he at once cleared off.

The presence of this crowd of irregular horse, seeking protection at Hullial, was the cause of some embarrassment to Captain Dickinson and further delayed his march; but Wellesley was able to write on the 11th August :—"I heard from Captain Dickinson yesterday that the Southern part of Soonda was entirely cleared of the vagabonds, and he was to march to Hangal on the 7th."

After much marching through difficult country, Wellesley surprised a detachment of the enemy in their camp at Manoli, destroyed or drove into the river every man of it, and captured all their transport animals, including two elephants, and six guns. But Doondia's main force was still at large.

It was shortly after this fight that the 1st of the 4th at last joined the main army.

Wellesley now organized a drive, to force Doondia into the fork made by the junction of the Ghatpurga and Malpurga rivers.

Two columns, one under his own command and the other under Lt.-Colonel Stevenson, with some Mahratta troops filling the gap between them, formed the drive between the two rivers; whilst Lt.-Colonel M. E. Capper's brigade, composed of the 1st Bn. 4th Regiment Bombay N.I. and two other sepoy battalions*, with some Mahratta cavalry, was detached

* 2/2nd Bombay N.I. and 2/4th Madras N.I., which in 1903 became the 103rd Mahratta L.I. and the 75th Carnatic Infantry.

to march by a parallel course on the South side of the Malpurga, in order to prevent Doondia crossing that river, which was then in flood.

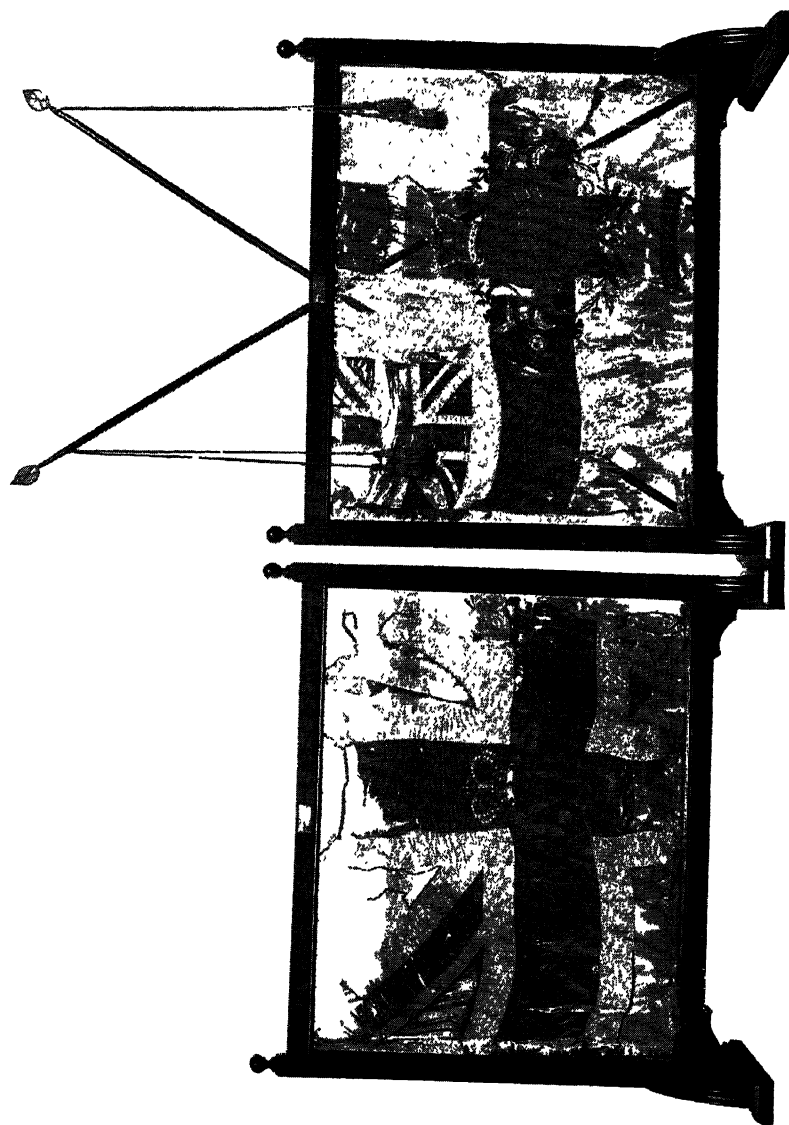
On Capper's line of march were two forts, Hoolybud and Sershingy, still held by some of Doondia's followers; and Capper succeeded in obtaining possession of both forts, which were eight miles apart, on the same day—the 22nd August, 1800.

At the capture of Hoolybud, the Right Wing of the 1st of the 4th, commanded by Captain Dickinson, was entrusted with the main attack, and Lieutenant W. Hull was severely wounded by being hurled down from the top of a ladder when leading the "forlorn hope" of the storming party.

The Left Wing of the Battalion, under Lieutenant F. Spellissy, formed part of the attack on Sershingy, which was a fort of considerable strength. The fire of the enemy was so heavy that the pioneers could not place the ladder against the wall, so it was carried there by some officers, but was found to be too short. The outer gate was then stormed, but it was too narrow to admit a gun upon its carriage, so one was dismounted and carried to the inner gate by a detachment of Bombay Artillery, under a gruelling fire from the fort; the gate was then blown open, and the usual scene of slaughter ensued.

In a despatch reporting the capture of these two forts, Wellesley mentions the services of Captain Dickinson and the 1st of the 4th, and adds:—"The officers and troops who made these attacks conducted themselves much to my satisfaction." A mention in a despatch by Wellesley was by no means easy to obtain and was never awarded except for exceptional services.

When Capper's brigade reached Jellahal on the 24th August, the Malpurga suddenly fell and Doondia with his army crossed to the South bank of the river by a ford close to the junction of the two rivers, thus escaping from the net, though he had lost ten thousand draught bullocks, five guns and a quantity of munitions, which fell into Wellesley's hands.



OLD COLOURS OF THE 7TH REGIMENT OF BOMBAY NATIVE INFANTRY.
(*Vide* Appendix 3.)

Wellesley himself now crossed to the South of the Malpurga by a very deep ford at Jellahal, and after a few days' halt to replenish supplies, continued the chase eastwards into the Nizam of Hyderabad's dominions, the 1st of the 4th being included in the infantry of Wellesley's column.

Other columns, the direction of whose marches are indicated on Map No. 2, were detached to move by separate routes to attempt to head off Doondia.

Several forced marches had been made, when intelligence came in that the enemy was not far ahead. So Wellesley left the infantry to follow on and made a rapid advance with only his four cavalry regiments. After six miles he came upon Doondia's force of five thousand men drawn up in battle array near Conagul and forming the four regiments of cavalry into a single line, Wellesley personally led them in a charge which entirely dispersed the enemy, Doondia Wao being slain in the *mêlée*.

Amongst the captured baggage was found a baby boy, said to be Doondia's son. He was taken to Wellesley's tent, and most kindly treated; Wellesley later on gave several hundred pounds for his maintenance. This boy grew up to be a handsome and intelligent youth, in the employment of the Government of Mysore.

Shortly after Doondia's death, Stevenson routed another group of the enemy and the remainder of the bandits soon dispersed or were hunted down, Wellesley thus bringing this campaign to a completely successful conclusion.

The Battalion now had a short rest with the army at Hubli, near Darwar, until November, when it marched to Seringapatam, and on the 10th December, 1800, it left that place as part of a force under Colonel Stevenson, which accompanied the Resident and the Dewan of Mysore to take over possession of the province of Wynaad.

This service was accomplished before the end of January, 1801, after some slight opposition and a few casualties.

Stevenson with the bulk of his force then descended the Ghauts to the Malabar coast, leaving the 1st of the 4th and another battalion of Native Infantry as a garrison in Wynaad.

Wynaad is the beautiful country in the vicinity of the Nilgiri Hills, but the troops were not left long in peace to admire the scenery, as a rebellion broke out and the garrison had a strenuous time in quelling it throughout the monsoon of 1801.* After this, the other battalion was ordered elsewhere and the 1st Battalion 4th Regiment was left, split up in detachments holding small posts, as the sole garrison of the province.

A regrettable incident now occurred. On the 11th October, 1802, a body of about five hundred Nairs, armed only with swords and bows and arrows, made an attack on the post of Pancorta Cotta, which was occupied by seventy men of the Battalion, with two British Officers.

The Nairs delivered the attack in three parties, and took the detachment completely by surprise. One party of Nairs secured the barrack of arms, another surrounded the officers' house, and the third attacked the sepoys. The buildings were set on fire at several places and the men cut down as they came out of their huts. Captain J. P. Dickinson and Ensign A. Maxwell were killed, being mangled in a dreadful manner, and of the sepoys twenty were killed and thirty wounded, most of the latter subsequently dying.

All Captain Dickinson's property was destroyed, except his mare, and only one of his servants escaped, several of them being burnt to death. The arms of the detachment were carried off by the rebels, but the ammunition being in Captain Dickinson's house was blown up.

The Headquarters of the Battalion, now commanded by Major J. Drummond, was at Pulingah, some nine miles from the scene of this disaster, but instead of

* A "List of Officers Corresponding," dated Nov., 1801, of the 1st Bn. 4th Regt. N.I., shows twenty-one officers, of whom nine were present for duty with the battalion.

moving out after the rebels, only defensive measures were taken. This provoked a merited rebuke from Wellesley and the instruction that "If the rebels are in force, let a junction be formed, and then not a minute be lost in dashing at them, whatever be their force."

An attack on another post at Manantoedy,* commanded by Lieutenant Grant, was easily repulsed and the Battalion was then employed until December in putting down this rebellion. It then marched down the Ghauts to join Colonel Montresor's brigade on the coast, leaving detachments at Tambacherry (Lieut. J. A. Kempe), Pultengalla (Lieut. I. Kinnersley) and Peria (Lieut. W. Grant).

All communication with these posts was cut off by the rebels for nearly twelve months, the officers and men enduring severe privations, until they were relieved by Colonel Montresor in 1803.

The rest of the Battalion, after being at Panoor, near Tellicherry, was employed against the rebels until July, 1803, when it marched with Colonel Spry's brigade through Canara to Goa, because our Portuguese allies were fearing an invasion by the French.

Here they remained, probably grumbling at their luck to be sitting in Goa whilst the battle of Assaye was being fought, until in May, 1804, the Battalion sailed in the "Sorah" for Bombay and then moved on to Baroda, where they arrived on the 14th July.

They then marched to Dohud in Malwa, as part of General Murray's army, which is chiefly remembered for the strangely inconspicuous part it played whilst Lake's campaign against Holkar was in progress. They stayed with this army, which was later commanded by General Jones, occasionally being detached on long marches as escort to treasure, till the end of the campaign against the Mahratta Confederacy, when the Battalion moved to Bombay, arriving there on the 17th March, 1806; afterwards being stationed at Sirur and Ahmednagar.

* *Vide* Map No. 1.

In 1808 the Battalion formed part of the Poona Subsidiary Force, commanded by Colonel Wallace, in the chase of a freebooter named Bungus in Khandesh, and in 1810 it was again in the P.S. Force, now under Colonel Montresor, which was pursuing Meer Khan through Berar.

From this time till the commencement of the Mahratta War of 1817-19 the Battalion was kept busy, constantly changing its stations and several times belonging to the P.S. Force, but no events of much interest occurred.

We must now leave the 1st Battalion 4th Regiment Bombay N.I. at Ahmednagar, where it arrived from Poona on the 8th August, 1817, and revert to the adventures of the Marine Battalion.

During the war with France from 1800 to 1814, French privateers were frequently despatched to prey on British commerce in Indian waters.

These French ships, using the ports of Mauritius as their advanced base, carried on a predatory warfare with singular activity and boldness, capturing from first to last not less than two million pounds' worth of the property of British and Indian merchants sailing under our flag.

The small cruisers of the East India Company did not shun conflict with these more heavily armed vessels whenever met, but although the privateers were often severely handled, they generally managed to escape, owing to the inferior sailing qualities of the Bombay ships.

Conspicuous amongst these actions was that fought by the Honourable Company's brig "Intrepid" with a French privateer, off Muskat on the 22nd November, 1800.

The enemy, well aware of his superiority in gun power and numbers of crew, made several attempts to board the "Intrepid," but was baffled by well-directed fire and clever manœuvring, and after an engagement lasting two and a half hours, the privateersman sailed away, the "Intrepid's" rigging having

been too shot about to enable her to give chase. The "Intrepid" lost 1 officer and 5 men killed, and 3 officers and 19 men wounded, amongst whom were some of the detachment of the Marine Battalion.

Perhaps an even greater menace to Bombay trading ships than these French privateers were the Joasmi pirates of the Persian Gulf. One incident will best illustrate the character and methods of these pirates. In 1808 they captured the merchantman "Minerva," and proceeded to purify the ship by sprinkling water and perfumes on the deck. Then the captive crew were bound and brought singly to the gangway, where one of the pirates cut their throats, with the exclamation of "Allah Akhbar," and the body was thrown into the sea, until all had been disposed of except the mate, the carpenter and the only lady on board, the Armenian wife of the Captain.

The two former were preserved to assist in working the captured ship, and it is to the credit of the pirates that the lady was well treated and later ransomed by the Political Agent at Bushire. The pirates took the "Minerva" into their fortified harbour of Ras-ul-Khyma,* armed her with guns and used her as a unit of their fleet.

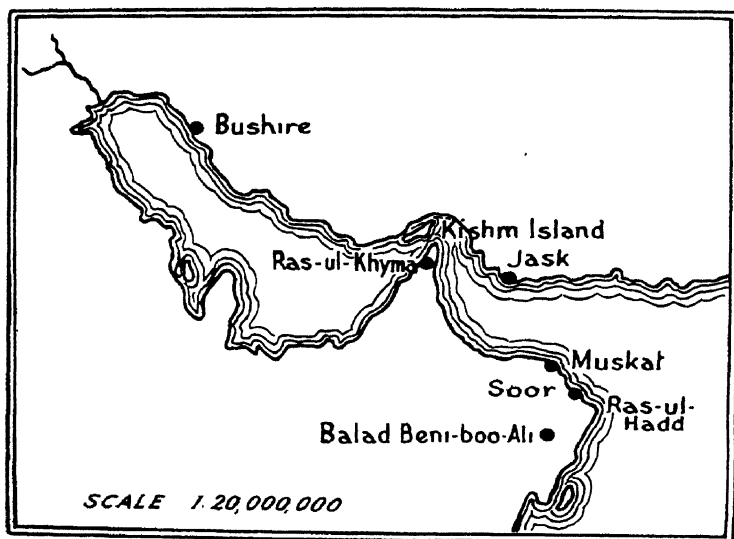
In spite of several such incidents, the Bombay Government was anxious to avoid hostilities and issued an order that officers of the Bombay Marine were on no account to fire on suspected pirates, until fired on by them.

This order was responsible for the capture of the Honourable Company's cruiser "Sylph," of eight guns, for when a fleet of dhows was seen bearing down on her, she could not open fire until they did. Consequently the dhows were able to run alongside and from their high overhanging prows, which towered above the little cruiser's waist, the pirates fired down on the crew and hurled large stones upon them and then, after they had boarded her, a desperate hand-to-hand fight took place on her decks.

* *Vide* Map No. 3.

One of the ship's officers, badly wounded by sword cuts, fell down the hatchway and was dragged into a store room by three of the crew, who then barricaded the door. These were the only survivors of the ship's company, as all the rest, including the whole detachment* of the Marine Battalion, were killed.

SKETCH-MAP OF THE
PERSIAN GULF



Shortly after this occurrence, H.M.S. "Néréide" came on the scene and seeing the "Sylph" amongst a crowd of dhows, gave chase, when the dhows quitted their prize and, making use of their superior speed, escaped. The "Sylph" was then boarded by a party from the "Néréide," and the wounded officer—Lieut. Graham—and the men in the barricaded room were rescued.

*. The only mention of this incident in the Battalion's "Digest of Services" is a list of the pensioned widows of the N.C.O.'s and men killed on the "Sylph."

The pirates now became more and more bold, and issuing from the Gulf, they flaunted their blood-red flag off the West coast of India. Their fleet is said to have consisted of 63 large vessels and 813 smaller ones, manned by 19,000 men.

At last the Government were compelled reluctantly to take action. A punitive expedition was despatched from Bombay, with two ships of the Royal Navy and ten of the Bombay Marine, and arrived off the piratical stronghold of Ras-ul-Khyma in the Persian Gulf on the 11th November, 1809. The troops were commanded by Lt.-Colonel L. Smith, of H.M.'s 65th Foot, and included two companies of the Marine Battalion, under Captain Egan, as well as the usual small detachments of the Battalion on each of the Company's ships.

Owing to the shallowness of the water the ships of the Royal Navy could not get within three miles of the town, so the bombardment was carried out by the smaller ships of the Bombay Marine. Early on the 15th the disembarkation of the troops commenced and when little more than one company had landed, the enemy issued from the town and attacked them whilst forming up on the beach. This attack was repulsed by grape fired from the ships and by the steadiness of the few troops already on shore.

Soon after the disembarkation had been completed, the wall on one side of the town was stormed and the flag hoisted on one of the towers.

The town consisted of some well-built houses, interspersed by a lot of inflammable huts. The huts were set on fire and the Joasmi were gradually smoked out of the defended houses, but some hard fighting took place before the town was cleared of the enemy, who lost some 300 men, our casualties being slight.

About fifty enemy vessels, including the captured "Minerva," were then burnt in the harbour.

Next morning the force re-embarked, but was followed up and harassed by large parties of the enemy, who kept up a lively fire, so the effect of the

capture of the town was not so complete as could have been wished, the enemy being able to feel that they had driven the troops back to their ships.

The squadron then visited other piratical ports at the South end of the Gulf and destroyed a large number of dhows and several forts.

Most of these places were taken easily, but at Luft, a port on the North side of the island of Kishm, some lively incidents occurred.

This place possessed a strong castle, with walls 14 feet thick, provided with loop-holes, and having only one strong gate. There were also several batteries and redoubts.

The summons to surrender having been ignored by the Joasmi chief Mulla Hussein, Colonel Smith landed some five hundred men, including a detachment of the Marine Battalion, at 2 p.m. on the 27th November.

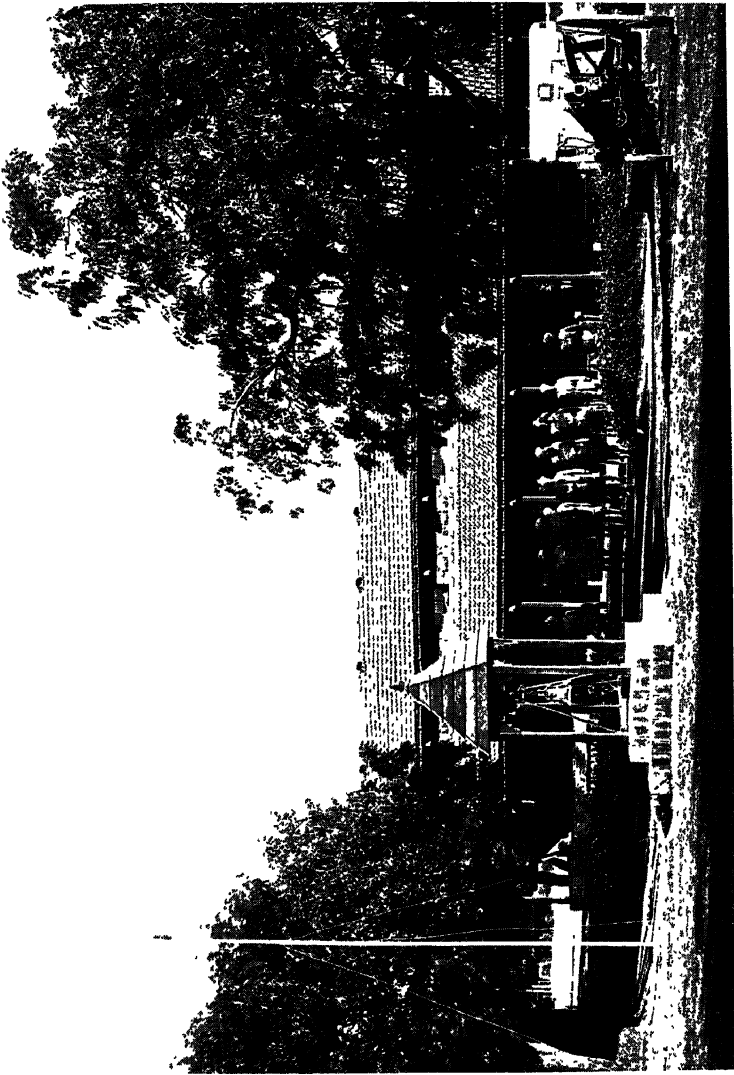
After a slight skirmish whilst these troops were forming up on the beach, all the pirates retired inside the castle walls and other works.

A gun was brought forward with the intention of blowing open the gate, but such an accurate fire was opened from the loop-holes that the troops were forced to seek shelter by lying behind ridges of sand and hillocks and the gun was abandoned before it had fired a shot.

An officer, who jumped up and called on his men to retrieve the gun, was at once shot dead and several men, who raised their heads above cover, were picked off by the accurate musketry fire. The force therefore remained lying behind cover until darkness enabled them to re-embark without molestation.

Throughout this trying afternoon the guns of the fleet had been pounding away at the castle with some effect and a message was conveyed to the enemy commander that unless the place surrendered the bombardment would be resumed at daylight.

When day dawned, and the men were ready at their guns on the ships, everyone was astonished to see a



THE QUARTER GUARD, WESTMACOTT LINES, EAST KIRKEE.

Showing the War Memorial Bell of the 107th and the Turkish gun of the 48th Pioneers.

single man waving the Union Jack on the summit of the castle walls.

During the night, Lieut. Hall, of the Honourable Company's ship "Fury," had gone ashore alone on his own initiative, taking the flag in his hand, and had advanced singly to the gate. He found that the castle had been abandoned by most of the garrison and the few who remained fled at his approach, probably thinking him to be the leader of an attacking party.

Thus one man took possession of this strong place, to the surprise and admiration of the whole force.

Early in 1810 the expedition returned to Bombay. Although the Joasmi had received some punishment, they were by no means finally suppressed, and it was not long before they were again making themselves a nuisance on the sea.

On the 21st September, 1810, the Honourable Company's cruiser "Aurora" was captured off Mauritius by the French frigates "Iphigenia" and "Astrea" and was taken into Port Louis.

It was the custom of the French on Mauritius, then known as the Isle of France, to attempt to inveigle their prisoners of war into joining the French service, and in this they were often successful, a number of Irish soldiers and some sepoys having been persuaded to enter the enemy's service, amongst these being some of the crews of captured ships, who had fought resolutely against the French before falling into their hands.

In marked contrast to this was the conduct of the detachment of seventeen men of the Marine Battalion taken off the "Aurora." Although every inducement was held out to them to adjure their allegiance and to join the French, all solicitations were without effect.

A new system was then tried and the sepoys were forced to perform dirty work and to endure hardships and want of provisions. Each morning also they were brought out and shewn the captured Bengal and Madras sepoys, in French uniforms, enjoying luxuries, when persuasion was again tried in vain, for the

Marines answered by abusing the traitors, who had forgotten their military oath and deserted their colours, and such effect had their noble example upon these men, that, overcome with shame, a large body of them threw down their arms and quitted the ranks.

After this unexpected event, the Bombay marines were confined on board hulks and in cells, enduring every hardship, until they were released upon the capture of the island by the British in the following year.

On the return of this detachment to Bombay, a Government Order, of which the following is an abstract, was ordered to be read on parade at the head of every regiment of the Bombay Army :—

“The Hon’ble the Governor in Council, having received official information from the Commander of the “Aurora” cruizer, that the late Government of the Isle of France and its officers had endeavoured to prevail upon a Detachment of the Marine Battalion embarked on board that vessel, to enter the French Service, after her capture . . . and that various means, as well of persuasion as of a coercive nature, had been resorted to, to induce the sepoys to swerve from their allegiance to the Honourable Company, deemed it proper to cause the circumstances of these transactions to be thoroughly investigated.

“The Board of Officers appointed for this purpose, having closed their proceedings, the Governor in Council has sincere satisfaction in announcing that the result of the enquiry has afforded another distinguished proof of the fidelity and attachment of the Native Army of this Establishment, under circumstances of a very trying nature.

“It appears that in addition to repeated offers of encouragement, and failure in that, to the infliction of severe and even cruel treatment to induce and compel the Detachment generally to betray their duty, Sheikh Boodle in particular, upon refusing to enter the French Service, was thrice severely wounded in the arm and once on the head, the effects of which (it is apprehended) have incapacitated this faithful soldier from the performance of further duty.

“The conduct of the Detachment being considered as highly worthy of a marked testimony of Public approbation, the Governor in Council is, for this purpose, pleased to direct that a Silver Badge, with a suitable inscription, be presented to each man of the Party as enumerated in the following list; that Lance-Havildar Dhondnac Pudnac be promoted to the Rank of Havildar, Koor-

sahib Khan, Lance-Naique, to that of Naique, and that each of the Privates receive the pay of Naique, until respectively promoted to that rank by vacancies in the Corps to which they belong.

"List of Detachment of the Marine Battalion embarked on board the Hon'ble Company's Cruiser 'Aurora':—

"Naique Dhondnac Pudnac, Lance-Havildar.

Sepoy Koorsahib Khan, Lance-Naique.

Sepoy Ramnac Malnac.

Sepoy Sutnac Lingnac.

" Sheikh Bahadur.

" Sunkernac Sumnac.

" Dhamnac Dadnac.

" Lucknac Damnac.

" Sheikh Boodle.

" Ambunac Dhrumnac.

" Seedy Abraham.

" Goonnac Dhonnac.

" Rugona Khan.

" Sheikh Moideen.

" Sheikh Ishmail.

" Downac Maikindnac."

" Dhondnac Bagnac.

During 1811 detachments of the Marine Battalion served on the ships of the Bombay Marine forming part of the expedition which conquered the island of Java from the Dutch, of which place Sir Stamford Raffles was appointed our first Governor. These detachments suffered a few casualties whilst being employed on shore.

In 1815 occurred the fight between the Honourable Company's ship "Nautilus," fourteen guns, and the American National ship "Peacock," twenty-two guns, in the Straits of Sunda. Although peace had been signed between England and America, yet the "Peacock" called on the "Nautilus" to haul down her colours and on her refusal, attacked her, and after a severe and protracted action succeeded in capturing her.

Subedar Elinac Sonnac of the Marine Battalion was killed, both his legs being carried away by a cannon shot; the commander of the "Nautilus," Lieut. Boyce, also lost a leg, and several men were killed and wounded. Later, Lieut. Boyce wrote of the conduct of the Marines during this action in the highest terms.

This is probably the only occasion on which the Indian Army has fought against Americans.

A long correspondence took place between the two

Governments about this fight having occurred after peace had been declared and the matter was finally settled by the Americans agreeing to pay pensions to the disabled and to the dependents of the killed.

Detachments of the Marine Battalion from off the cruisers "Benares" and "Teignmouth," during their cruise in the Eastern Islands, in June, 1816, took part in the storming of a position at Moros, near Macassar, in Celebes, held by the troops of the Rajah of Boni. The orders published on the occasion speak handsomely of the conduct of the Marines, of whom three were killed and four wounded out of the total casualties of seventy-four.

A few days later the "Teignmouth" lost her whole detachment of the Marine Battalion, numbering 1 N.C.O. and 17 men. They had been placed in charge of two captured proas, when it is supposed the Malay crews, taking advantage of a dark and stormy night, cut the cables and having overpowered the sepoys, managed to escape. But whether the marines were murdered or drowned was never known, as nothing was ever heard again of them or of the proas.

The marines of the "Benares" had better fortune, but of the eleven survivors out of the original detachment of 28 who returned to Bombay in 1817, there was not one man but could show scars of from one to four wounds.

The Naik was promoted to Jemadar, and a drummer, who had particularly distinguished himself, also received promotion.

The men of the Marine Battalion were meanwhile taking part in many other voyages. A letter dated at Sydney on the 18th July, 1817, from Governor Macquarrie of New South Wales, expresses satisfaction at the conduct of Subadar Balnak Tannac and the Detachment under his command who had been sent there as a guard over the convicts.

These were very early days in Australian history, when most of that country was still unexplored.

By 1817 the disturbed state of central India was drawing to a crisis. The large masses of robbers known as Pindaris were creating chaos and frequently raided far into British territory, making life a terror to the defenceless villagers. Though the five Mahratta States, which had made treaties with the British and within whose domains the small "Subsidiary Forces" of our troops were stationed, were supposed to co-operate against the Pindaris, yet they did little to help, and it was suspected that they actually abetted the raiders.

After 1815 the advocates of peace at any price were as active in England as after 1918, and the Governor General had been sent out with strong injunctions to pursue a peaceful policy, but he decided that drastic action against the Pindaris was essential.

Large armies were assembled in various parts of India to move against them, which left very small forces available near the capitals of the Mahratta chiefs; and no sooner had the armies concentrated and begun to move against the Pindaris than the Mahrattas became openly hostile. Their actions, however, were badly co-ordinated.

Only a few incidents, in which our two battalions played minor parts can be followed here, and all that can be said of the campaign as a whole is that, though no great battle was fought, it resulted in the Mahratta territories coming under British control and the complete stamping out of the Pindaris, thus making British rule supreme right across the Indian peninsula up to the frontiers with Sind and the Punjab.

By the end of October, 1817, Brigadier-General L. Smith's 4th Division had advanced some seventy miles to the North of Ahmednagar to take up its position on the borders of Khandesh, as one of the forces to deal with the Pindaris. The 1st of the 4th had been left at Ahmednagar, in order to bring up the heavy ordnance and other supplies when required, but the Grenadier company of the Battalion had been attached to the 1st Bn. 3rd Regiment Bombay N.I.,

which marched with the 4th Division, and its Light company formed part of a Light Battalion placed at Sirur, between Ahmednagar and Poona.

The Peishwa now commenced hostilities at Poona by burning the Residency, but the Mahrattas immediately received a sharp check from the little force under Colonel Burr at the Battle of Kirkee, on the 5th November.

The Light Battalion was hurried to Kirkee, where it arrived on the day after this battle, and the 4th Division counter-marched through Ahmednagar and Sirur, arriving on the North side of the Moota-Mula river, on the opposite bank to Poona City, on the 13th November, having been harassed by Mahratta horse all the way from Sirur. The troops camped on the ground where the golf links are now situated, on the North side of what was then called Piquet* Hill.

Guns were placed on Piquet Hill and the heaviest of these, an 18 pounder, caused some annoyance to the Mahrattas round about the British cantonment, between Ghorpuri village and Poona City, which had been evacuated by our troops a few days before hostilities commenced.

Smith's task was to cross the river in order to attack the Mahratta army on the other side. There were two fords available, one below Yerowda village near Piquet Hill, and the other at the Sangum where the Moota and Mula rivers join. The first ford was difficult to cross and had to be improved under the enemy's fire, but a passage was forced and one Brigade established itself on the South bank just before it was dark on the 16th, and spent that night near Ghorpori village.

Early the next morning Smith moved with the remainder of his Division, in which were both the Grenadier and the Light company of the 1st of the 4th, across the ground where Westmacott Lines† now

* Later known as Bund Hill, on which now stands the mansion in which Mr. Ghandi kept his sensational fast early in 1933.

† See page 24. These lines at various times were occupied by each of the battalions of Bombay Pioneers, and were regarded as their home station.

stand, to the Sangum ford, and under a fairly sharp fire forced the passage. In this action the Light company of the 1st of the 4th lost two killed and four wounded, the latter including Jemadar Sheikh Hussein, who had an arm taken off by a cannon ball.

To the disappointment of the troops, the Mahrattas would not stand to fight, but hastily retreated, some towards Satara and another party towards Singhur Fort; Poona City was occupied and our flag raised on the Peishwa's palace without further opposition. Some forty guns were abandoned by the Mahrattas.

The total casualties of the Division on the 16th and 17th November were fifteen killed and sixty-seven wounded.

The Peishwa had made many endeavours to corrupt the fidelity of the Native troops, but it is officially recorded that not a sepoy had deserted since the beginning of this war.

On the 19th the Grenadier and Flank companies of the 1st of the 4th, under Captain Watson, marched with a few other troops, the whole being commanded by Major Turner, for the foot of Singhur Hill, where, after a slight skirmish, they captured fourteen guns, some jewels and other booty.

Smith found that he could not at once take up the pursuit of the Mahratta army, but on the 21st November he marched off towards Satara and commenced his long-drawn-out chase of the Peishwa, which continued till that chieftain surrendered himself on the 1st June, 1818. The Light company of the 1st of the 4th, as part of the Light Battalion, took part in this strenuous marching and was present at a few feebly contested fights, the casualties of the Light Battalion during the whole chase amounting to only eleven wounded.

On the same day as Smith started from Poona, he detached the Grenadier company of the 1st of the 4th, four companies from other units and some guns, the whole commanded by Captain Watson of the 1st of the 4th, with orders to attack a body of the Peshwa's Arab troops, who had entrenched a position and

mounted guns in the Bhor Ghaut, thus interrupting communication between Bombay and Poona. The enemy, however, decamped before the detachment arrived and Captain Watson proceeded on to Panwell, the port just opposite to Bombay Island; and having taken over a large quantity of military stores, the detachment escorted them to Sirur, which Brigadier-General Smith was using as a *Depôt* for his force, arriving there on the 20th December.

The Grenadier company then rejoined the headquarters of the Battalion at Ahmednagar.

Numerous Mahratta forts were captured in the Dekkan and Konkan, and although many of these were strong places perched on the top of precipitous hills, they were taken with almost incredible ease. Indeed so many forts were captured that providing garrisons to hold them caused some embarrassment.

At the end of November, 1817, a little force consisting of a Detachment of the Marine Battalion and some Bombay Artillery sailed from Bombay to capture the forts of Severndroog, a Mahratta port on the Konkan coast, which surrendered on the 4th December.

The General Order published after the capture of Severndroog states:—"Though opposed by very superior numbers, the energy of this small force succeeded in surmounting every obstacle, escalading and taking in open day, with a party of only fifty sepoys of the Marine Battalion and thirty seamen, led by Captain Campbell of the 9th Regiment, the fort of Kundah, notwithstanding the heavy fire of the enemy. This gallant enterprise having completely intimidated the enemy, the other two forts of Goa and Gunjeera were abandoned during the night."

Subadar Hurry Herikur of the Marine Battalion particularly distinguished himself during the assault.

The day after the fall of Severndroog, a reinforcement from the Marine Battalion, under Captain F. Farquharson, arrived, followed shortly afterwards by the newly raised 1st Bn. 10th Regiment Bombay N.I.,*

* In 1903 became the 119th Infantry.



B.T.A. GRIFFITHS

SHAKO PLATE OF THE
7TH REGIMENT OF BOMBAY NATIVE INFANTRY.

Both of about 1835.



B.T.A. G.

CAP BADGE OF
THE MARINE BATTALION.

whose commanding Officer — Lt.-Colonel Michael Kennedy—took over command of the operations in the Konkan. His command consisted of a few guns, his own battalion amongst whose newly enlisted sepoys there was only a handful of trained men, and the detachment of the Marine Battalion. This very small force and another little one based on Malwan proceeded to conquer the whole strip of Mahratta country between the Ghauts and the sea, called the Konkan.

Madinghur Fort was taken by storm on the 15th February, 1818, although the garrison was twice as numerous as the besieging force. During the investment the sepoys cheerfully gave up their tents, carpets and blankets for making sandbags, and Captain Farquharson, Lieuts. Dominicetti and Capon of the Marine Battalion received high praise for leading storming parties.

Before the end of June, the forts of Ramghur,* Paulghur, Russalghur, Anjunwell and other strongholds had been reduced, the detachment of the Marine Battalion taking a prominent part in all these actions.

At about the same time detachments of the Marine Battalion in the Hon'ble Company's cruisers "Prince of Wales" and "Sylph" were landed near Malwan and surprised a party of the enemy, killing twenty-five of them and taking some prisoners.

In March, 1818, Subadar Sheikh Pir Mohomed, commanding a detachment of the 1st of the 4th at the outpost of Howrah, marched out his little party and attacked a body of Mahratta horse, killing several and putting the remainder to flight. He was rewarded by being made Commandant of the hill fort of Lowgurh, an allowance for keeping a horse and a "handsome compliment."

One of the few forts which put up a troublesome resistance was Mallegaon, in Khandesh, which was garrisoned mostly by Arab troops. This place, which was not a hill fort, was besieged by part of the Hyderabad Subsidiary Force, under Lt. - Colonel

* Spelling as in contemporary records.

MacDowell, from the 16th May till the 13th June. On the 29th May an attempt was made to storm the fort, which was repulsed with some loss; a requisition was then sent for more guns. The 1st of the 4th, under Major Watson, was despatched from Ahmednagar with guns and mortars and arrived before Mallegaon on the 1st June. The bombardment was then continued with renewed vigour and after two of the enemy's magazines had been blown up, the garrison agreed to march out and lay down their arms. The Battalion then moved on to Nassik.

Early in 1819 Major Watson was put in command of a Field Column, consisting of his own battalion and eight companies from other units, which marched around clearing up the country, visiting Alligaon, Sirur and Satara. On this Column being broken up, the 1st of the 4th marched to Severndroog.

The Pindari War fizzled out about the middle of 1819, when, for the first time in all known history, there was peace in India from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin.

Having established order out of anarchy in India, the Government resolved to continue the good work by extirpating piracy in the Persian Gulf. Since the return of the expedition nine years earlier, the Joasmi had become more and more truculent, cruising off the coast of Katch and attacking merchantmen. Several actions had occurred between the Company's ships and the pirates.

A force, under the command of Major-General Sir W. G. Kerr, consisting of 1,645 European troops and 1,424 Sepoys, together with 3 ships of the Royal Navy, 9 ships of the Bombay Marine and 18 transports assembled at Bombay.

Included in this force were two companies of the Marine Battalion, numbering 6 British Officers, 4 Indian Officers and 190 Rank and File; in addition to the detachments serving as marines on the Honourable Company's nine ships.

When the force was occupied in the reduction of

the piratical strongholds, the men of the Marine Battalion serving on the cruisers were landed and with the two companies already on shore were formed into a Provisional Battalion, under the command of Captain Dischamps.

Subadar Major Sheikh Nathoo,* the Marine Battalion, was appointed Aide-de-Camp to Major-General Sir W. G. Kerr for the duration of the operations, and was provided with a horse and allowances.

The expedition duly sailed for the Gulf and was joined by six hundred warriors of our ally the Sultan of Muskat, in two frigates.

A landing was effected on the 3rd December, 1819, and the troops were formed about two miles from Ras-ul-Khyma across the isthmus which connects the peninsula on which the fortress stands with the main land. The troops advanced, driving in the enemy piquets, and dug trenches and erected batteries on the land side of the town. A bombardment from shore and ships then commenced.

The enemy appeared to be short of ammunition, as they used some stone cannon balls and also collected and fired back our 12 and 18 pounder balls, which fitted their guns. Some 24 pounders were then landed from the fleet.

During the night the Arabs crept up to our outposts, speared the sentries and entering the trenches, carried off one gun. Some of the 65th Foot made a counter-attack, which cleared out the enemy, who left ninety dead behind; the gun was recovered 100 yards from the trenches.

The 24 pounders having made a breach, the troops went forward to the assault, when the town was found to be empty, except for a few women. Later the chief, with a large number of his men, surrendered.

Several other strongholds were taken and a great number of vessels destroyed, the work being more thoroughly accomplished than by the former expedition.

* *Vide* page 31.

On the 8th January, 1820, a treaty was concluded with nearly all the maritime tribes of Arabs in the Persian Gulf; the main scope of which was the suppression of piracy. Chiefly through the influence of Captain T. P. Thompson, 17th Dragoons, who was political agent to the expedition, an article was included in the treaty abolishing the slave trade in the Gulf. This is believed to be the first mention made of the slave trade in any British treaty.

When the main part of the expedition returned to Bombay, a small force, which included the two companies of the Marine Battalion, was left at Ras-ul-Khyma, and later transferred to Kishm island.

In June of this year, 1820, a tribe of Arabs, called the Beni-boo-Ali, having rebelled against the authority of the Imam of Maskat, that ruler appealed to the Government of Bombay for help, at the same time accusing the tribe of piratical practices off the coast near Ras-ul-Hadd. Captain Thompson, H.M.'s 17th Dragoons, the officer left in charge on Kishm island, was ordered to investigate the matter and if the charges proved to be true, to take action against the tribe.

A letter was despatched in the "Mercury" to the chief of the tribe, but as the surf at Lashkharah made it difficult for a boat to reach the beach, a messenger swam ashore with the letter and on landing he was at once killed by some Arabs.

This act decided Captain Thompson to assist the Imam to overcome the Beni-boo-Ali.

He therefore sailed from Kishm island with the two companies of the Marine Battalion, four companies of the 1st Bn. 2nd Regiment Bombay N.I. and a few artillerymen with eight guns. On arrival at Muskat, a plan was agreed on that this force should land at Soor and after being joined there by a contingent of the Imam's troops, should march to the capital of the Beni-boo-Ali, some sixty miles in the interior.

On the 1st November the force marched from Soor, the local troops being commanded by the Imam in

person, and the transport consisting mostly of camels. After a fatiguing trudge of eight days, an entrenched camp was formed some three miles from Balad Beni-boo-Ali, the capital of the tribe.

A demand was sent that the town should be surrendered, the murderers of the messenger be given up and that the tribe should hand over their arms.

It is probable that this last demand was included at the suggestion of the Imam, who desired that the tribe should be thoroughly crushed, and must have known that the retention of their arms by the Arabs was a point of honour on which they would never yield.

The Beni-boo-Ali professed themselves willing to comply with the terms, with the exception of the handing over of their arms, and, unhappily for him, Captain Thompson refused to waive this point.

Leaving a guard in the camp, Captain Thompson advanced on the morning of the 9th November, with 380 sepoys, 4 light guns and 2,000 of the Imam's men, and soon arrived near the town, which was situated amongst some date groves.

The light company of the 1st Bn. 2nd Regiment, which headed the column, had no sooner opened fire when about 900 of the enemy, headed by their Chief, were seen advancing from some undulating ground against the right flank of the column.

The order was given to form a line facing to the right, to fix bayonets and open fire, but almost before this manœuvre could be carried out the yelling charging Arabs were upon the troops, attacking them with their swords with impetuous fury, and a terrible scene of confusion and slaughter followed.

Despite the exertions of the officers, who strove to rally them by word and example, the line broke and falling back on the Imam's troops, infected them with the panic, and the whole force was pursued back to the camp, where the rout ended.

The Arabs gave no quarter and six out of the eight British Officers and 270 men were killed in this affair, not counting the casualties of the Imam's troops, of

which the share of the Marine Battalion was Lieut. Shortt, 4 Indian Officers and 85 Rank and File killed, only 20 men of the Battalion who marched from camp that morning escaping with their lives.

The Imam displayed much personal courage, and was wounded whilst endeavouring to save an artilleryman.

During the night the enemy attacked the camp, but were repulsed and the force then returned to Muskat; from whence Captain Thompson*, with the remnants of his troops, embarked for Kishm island.

As soon as the news of this disaster reached the Bombay Government, they took steps to despatch an expedition to restore our influence in the Persian Gulf.

An army numbering 117 British Officers, 1,263 European troops, and 1,686 sepoys, with 1,611 camp followers, under the command of Major-General L. Smith, C.B., was embarked and arrived off Soor on the 27th January, 1821.

A unit in this force, called the Flank Battalion, consisted of the two flank companies of several Bombay regiments, including those of the 1st Bn. 4th Regiment Bombay N.I., the command of this temporary battalion being given to Major Watson of the 1st of the 4th. What was left of the two companies of the Marine Battalion on Kishm island, reinforced by the parties of Marines on the Honourable Company's ships accompanying the expedition, also joined the army; so detachments from both our battalions served together in this force.

After disembarking, a perimeter camp was made about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles from the beach, whilst the General, his staff and the Bombay European Regiment pitched their tents nearer the shore.

The enemy were quick in attempting to take advantage of the opportunity presented to them, and on the night of the 10th February, before their presence

* This disaster did not prevent Perrinet Thompson reaching the rank of General. Later, as an M.P., he was a staunch supporter of Wilberforce's efforts to put down slavery.

in the neighbourhood had been discovered, three hundred Arabs attacked this isolated camp. They were repulsed, after some sharp hand-to-hand fighting, in which some of our men had their arms completely severed by single strokes from the Arab sabres. The enemy left 11 dead and 12 wounded within the camp, the British loss amounting to 1 officer and 16 men killed, 3 officers and 23 men wounded.

The next morning the General quickly shifted his quarters to within the main camp.

Enough camels having been collected, the force marched and arrived before the capital of the tribe on the 2nd March, 1821.

The Beni-boo-Ali repeated their tactics of the previous year and filling the air with their war-cry, charged across the open plain upon the British force, which had formed square to receive them. They were met by a withering fire of musketry and grape, which mowed them down in heaps, but the survivors with desperate valour reached the square and with their swords and small round shields strove to break through the ranks of bayonets.

But their gallantry was in vain, the square stood firm, and of less than 1,000 Arab warriors, 500 were left on the field dead or wounded and 236 were taken prisoners, of whom 96 were wounded.

Our total loss was 29 killed and 173 wounded.

After a short bombardment, the town surrendered and the fortifications were blown up. The Imam's soldiers then cut down the date groves, broke down the water courses and made a desert of what had been an oasis inhabited by brave men.

Amongst the wounded prisoners was the Chief, Mohomed bin Ali, who with 150 of his men was taken to Bombay by the returning army. After two years, these prisoners of war were sent back to their country, a promise having been obtained from the Imam of Muskat that he would leave them in peace. The Bombay Government gave the tribe a sum of money to assist them to settle down again.

For their share in this small war, both the Marine Battalion and the 1st of the 4th were permitted to inscribe " Beni-boo-Ali " on their colours, this being the first of the battle honours to be gained by more than one of the battalions which were later to become Bombay Pioneers.

The two Flank companies rejoined the Headquarters of the 1st of the 4th at Dapuri, which is a part of Kirkee, on the 16th April, 1821. The next day Major Watson died from apoplexy.

For some time disputes had been going on with the Burmese over the question of political refugees who had fled to British protection ; the Burmese had also invaded British territory and extended their dominion in Assam, reaching Sylhet about 270 miles from Calcutta. Thus the Governor-General was forced against his will into a war, which lasted from early in 1824 until 1826, and at first went perilously near to being a disastrous failure.

The main expedition went by sea to Rangoon and thence up the river to near Ava; smaller forces were sent into Assam and down the coast from Chittagong to Arakan. The troops suffered greatly from disease and want of proper supplies and had some sharp fighting against the novel methods of war used by the Burmese.

Detachments of the Marine Battalion were in the six ships of the Bombay Marine employed with the expedition and performed good service with the River Flotilla, consisting of 20 rowing-boats each carrying one 18 pounder gun. Sir John Hayes, who commanded the Honourable Company's ships, wrote of them :—

" A portion of the Bombay Marine Battalion served on the coast of Arakan from the commencement to the termination of the war. They were present at the first action with the enemy on the Naaf, subsequently with me during the desperate action at Chumbala and afterwards at Arakan. They were present at the capture of Ramria and Sandaway, at which latter place they formed part of the garrison which maintained that post during the perilous state of the war. As the men in question belonged to one of the oldest Corps in the Native Army, it became necessary to give them Rank



A SEPOY OF THE MARINE BATTALION.

The blue summer clothing was replaced by khaki in 1894. The Snider rifle shown in the picture was issued in 1876, and was succeeded by the Martini-Henry in 1891.

and Precedence to the Non-Commissioned Officers over those composing the newly raised Flotilla Marine Sepoys, which appointments were approved by H.E. the Commander-in-Chief."

Sir John then proceeds to name several N.C.O.s of the Battalion who had done duty as Native Officers (one Havildar as Subadar Major), whilst serving with the Flotilla, and urges that they may be confirmed in those ranks on rejoining the Headquarters of their Battalion; and continues thus :—

"I hope I shall be excused for pressing such an object upon his Lordship's notice, when it is considered that the Corps in question is one of the oldest in India, and that it has seen more arduous and more foreign service than any other native regiment in the Company's army. I have personally been acquainted with its merits and patient endurance for a period of more than forty years' duration."

The Government replied that there was no precedent for such very rapid promotion, but on account of their good service each of the N.C.O.s concerned would be raised one step in rank.

Lieutenant Greer, commanding the Honourable Company's ship "Thetis," describes the following incident in a letter. On the 7th November, 1824, he was going from Elephant Point in one of the Flotilla boats, with a guard of six sepoy of the Marine Battalion, to visit the Senior Naval Officer at Rangoon. When his boat came abreast of a small creek, six Burmese war-boats pulled out and stood up close until abreast of Bassein creek, and then eight more war-boats appeared and tried to cut off his row-boat by pulling across the stream.

He opened fire with his 18 pounder and musketry, but two of the war-boats came alongside, when Lieut. Greer and the six sepoy jumped on board them and bayoneted every man in them. The other twelve war-boats then made off, followed by fire from his row-boat.

The detachments of the Battalion serving in this war lost a number of men from disease, and had 3 killed and 10 wounded in action.

At the conclusion of the first Burmese War, Assam and the strip of coast land called Arakan were annexed, the main part of Burma remaining as before under its King.

There is little to record during the next decade. The 1st of the 4th, which in 1824 had become the 7th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry, was several times employed in chasing refractory Bheels through their jungles, but had not much fighting to do.

In 1834 a company of the Marine Battalion was sent to take over the island of Sokotra, as the Government desired to use it as a coaling station and could not come to terms with the Sultan, without a show of force. This company suffered much from sickness, until the island was evacuated after the capture of Aden.

In anticipation of possible trouble with the Shah of Persia, whose forces were besieging Herat, a small expedition, which included one company of the Marine Battalion and the usual detachments on board the ships of what was now called the Indian Navy, was despatched to the Gulf in 1838. No hostilities occurred. This company was left as a garrison on Kharag island, near Bushire, till 1840. During its return journey on the "Lord Castlereagh," that ship was wrecked at the entrance to Bombay Harbour, and amongst those drowned were twenty-one men of the Marine Battalion.

The captain of the "Lord Castlereagh" commended "the coolness with which the sepoys of the Marine Battalion worked all day and their apparent cheerfulness during the dreadful calamity."

In 1839 detachments of the Battalion served in the "Coote" and "Mahé" at the capture of Aden from the Arabs, which was accomplished by the warships, together with four hundred men of the Bombay European Regiment, one Native Infantry battalion and some Artillery, embarked on transports.

At 9.30 a.m. on the 17th January the two ships opened fire and the enemy replied with spirit from the

shore batteries. The "Mahé" was taken right up to one fort, and after firing a couple of broadsides, the crew "boarded" the battery, when the Arabs fled from it.

At 11.30 the troops were disembarked from the transports and advanced through the town, the Arabs gradually retiring before them, until the Sultan's palace was seized and the British flag planted on it.

In making this important conquest, our total loss was only sixteen killed and wounded.

CHAPTER V

1838—1856

“ KELAT-I-GHILZIE ”	“ CANDAHAR, 1842 ”
“ GHUZNEE, 1842 ”	“ CABOOL, 1842 ”
“ MAHARAJPORE ”	“ HYDERABAD ” “ PUNJAB ”

IN 1838 the third unit, destined later to be part of the Bombay Pioneers, came into being; the raising of which as the 3rd Battalion of Shah Shuja's Contingent has been described in Chapter II.

We have now to follow its adventures in the 1st Afghan War, from which it emerged as the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie, unique in that its title was itself a battle honour, with the proud motto of “ Invicta ” and its special colour.

Each regular battalion of Bengal Native Infantry at this time had up to twenty-two British Officers on its establishment, but the battalions raised for the Shah's Contingent had only two. Captain Craigie and Lieut. McKean must have been excellent officers to have brought their Battalion to such a fine state of discipline, when it is remembered that it joined the main army only three months after being raised, and a fortnight later started on the march of 1,500 miles through the wastes of Sind and Afghanistan. It kept up its good spirit to the end of the war, when many others had allowed theirs to sink to a low level.

To reach Afghanistan for the foolish purpose of replacing Shah Shuja on the Afghan throne, the army had first to cross either the territories of the Sikhs, under Ranjhet Singh, or those of the Amirs of Sind. As the Sikh army was by far the more formidable, it

was decided to march through Sind, in callous contravention of a treaty with its Amirs to the effect that the rivers and roads of Sind were open to the traders of Hindustan, but that no armed vessels or military stores should pass through the country.

The "Army of the Indus" having concentrated at Ferozepore, it was joined on the 15th November, 1838, by Shah Shuja and his Contingent, and on the 2nd December the Shah and his 6,000 men started the march towards Sind, down the left bank of the Indus, followed at a week's interval by the main British Army, numbering 9,500 combatants, 38,000 camp followers and 30,000 camels. Some stores were carried down stream in the boats which were to be used to bridge the Indus.

On arrival in Sind the army was joined by a small force from Bombay, which had landed in the delta of the Indus, and Sir John Keane, the Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army, then took over command of the whole expeditionary force.

The Shah's Contingent crossed the Indus in boats between the 11th and 17th January, 1839, and moved down the right bank against the Amir of Larkhana, but matters in that quarter having been satisfactorily settled, the Contingent returned to Shikarpoor.

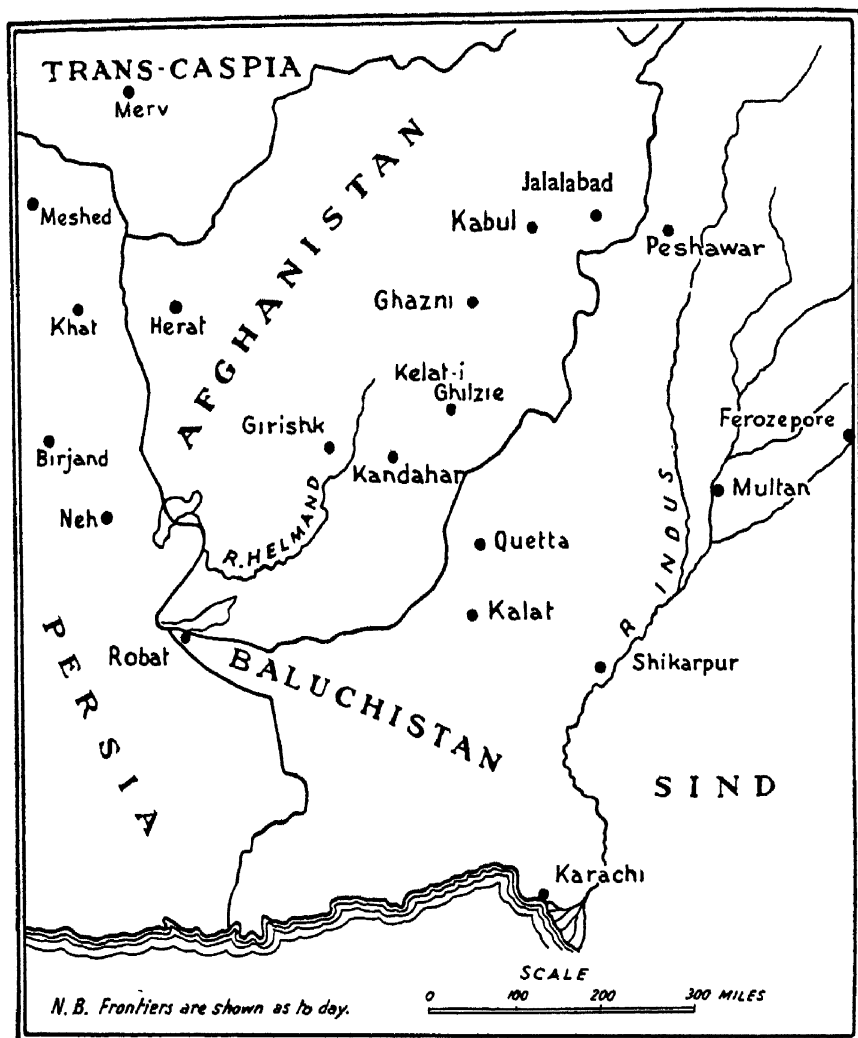
The main army, having thrown a bridge across the Indus, then took the lead in the march, the Shah and his Contingent following in rear; and now began the long and dreary trudge across the desert and up through the formidable Bolan Pass to the mud village of Quetta.

How many people, when now travelling in a comfortable railway carriage up the Bolan Pass, ever give a thought to the army which foot-slogged up it in 1839, clothed in red coats with white crossed belts, and accompanied by the political officers riding Arab ponies and wearing black frock-coats and top hats? *

After overcoming severe supply and transport difficulties at Quetta, the Force pushed on over the

* *Vide* Atkinson's "Sketches in Afghanistan."

AFGHANISTAN



Khojak Pass and Shah Shuja made his state entry into Kandahar.

A few days later, Shah Shuja held a Grand Review of the Army outside the city walls, during which the steadiness of the 3rd Battalion of the Shah's Contingent was duly noticed, but of the inhabitants of Kandahar only a handful, and those mostly children, could be induced to watch their restored monarch review his army of foreigners and infidels.

On the 27th June the march was continued towards Kabul. The force numbered 12,000, with 40 guns, of which 2,000 belonged to the Shah's Contingent and included the 3rd Infantry. The remainder were left at Kandahar and Quetta.

On the 21st July the army halted before the strong fort of Ghazni, which was found to be occupied by the Afghans, who considered it to be impregnable to assault. The army of Dost Mohomed (Amir of Afghanistan until ousted by Shah Shuja), was reported to be five marches from Ghazni.

The next day a party of fanatical "Ghazis" made an attack on the Shah's camp and were easily repulsed by the Contingent, this being the first action in which the 3rd Infantry were engaged. Fifty prisoners were captured and taken before Shah Shuja, who had them all promptly beheaded,—an act which, later on, was bitterly criticized in England and which did not tend to endear him to his Afghan subjects.

Ghazni was brilliantly stormed in the early morning of the 22nd July by the British troops, after a gate had been blown in by bags of gunpowder placed against it by a party of Engineers; but none of the Shah's Contingent took any part in the capture of the fortress.

The march was then resumed and most of Dost Mohomed's army having deserted him upon hearing of the fall of Ghazni, the British entered Kabul without further opposition on the 7th August, 1839. The "Grand Military Promenade" of 1,500 miles was completed, Shah Shuja was established on the

Afghan throne and the declared object of the expedition appeared to have been attained.

After the hardships of the march, the troops enjoyed the fine climate and plentiful supplies at Kabul and conditions there soon resembled those of an Indian cantonment. A number of English ladies joined their husbands and the British Envoy, Sir William Macnaghten, wrote that "all was 'couleur de rose'" in Afghanistan.

Shah Shuja instituted the Order of the Durani Empire, the 2nd Class of which he presented to Captain Craigie.

But the British army could not stay indefinitely in Afghanistan, separated as it was from British India by the none too friendly states of the Punjab and Sind, nor could it well evacuate the country and leave Shah Shuja to the mercy of his subjects. It was decided to send some of the troops back to India, but to keep a considerable garrison in the Country, with the hope that some solution of the dilemma would turn up.

Macnaghten, now virtual ruler in Afghanistan, soon had some of his Political Officers and small parties of troops entangled in distant parts of the country.

The 3rd Battalion of the Shah's Contingent remained in Kabul until the autumn of 1839, and one of the Envoy's letters mentions that the guard on the gate of the Balla Hissar was being found by "Craigie's Regiment." Then, with some other troops, it accompanied Shah Shuja and the Envoy to Jalalabad, where they went to avoid the extreme winter cold at the capital.

Macnaghten decided to send a punitive force to capture Pishut, the stronghold of Sayad Hussain, Padshah of Kunar, because that chief had refused to pay homage to Shah Shuja. Pishut lies in the Kunar valley and is forty-six miles from Jalalabad.

The 3rd Battalion of the Shah's Contingent formed part of this small detachment, which was commanded by Lieut.-Colonel Orchard.

After three days marching in pouring rain, the force arrived before the fort at dawn on the 18th January, 1840, and its three guns battered down the gate. There was, however, an inner gate and three separate attempts made by Lieut. Pigou, of the Engineers, failed to blow this in, because the gunpowder in the bags was wet. Two attempts to storm the fort by escalade were then made, both of which were repulsed. The ammunition for the guns having been expended, Orchard withdrew his force from the attack and during the night the Afghans evacuated the fort and fled away.

In this affair the 3rd Shah's Infantry lost Jemadar Ganesh Tiwari and nine men killed and twenty-two wounded, out of the detachment's total casualties of sixty-eight killed and wounded.

The Battalion remained in the Kunar valley until September, when it returned to Jalalabad, and on the 21st February, 1841, it marched thence as part of a detachment under Colonel Shelton* against a tribe called the Sanga Khel, who had been raiding convoys in the Khyber Pass.

This tribe inhabited the Narian valley, which runs from about eighteen miles South-East of Jalalabad into the Khyber Pass near Landi Khana. The valley is twenty-five miles long, in some places very narrow with precipitous cliffs, and at that time was crowded with small forts.

Shelton worked on the principle, which perhaps he had learnt in the Pyrenees, of always getting above his enemy and piqueting the heights as he moved; and by the 13th March he had completely subdued the Sanga Khel and destroyed one hundred and forty-four of their little forts. His casualties were nine killed and twenty wounded, the 3rd Shah's Infantry having only two men wounded.

Later in the year the 3rd Shah's Infantry was transferred to Kandahar, via Kabul, and from thence

* Shelton was Colonel of the 44th Foot, a veteran one-armed officer, whose first active service had been on Moore's retreat to Corunna.

was despatched to occupy the partially ruined fort of Kelat-i-Ghilzie, into which they marched early in November, 1841.

Situated between Ghazni and Kandahar, about eighty miles from the latter place, this isolated fort stands upon a barren hill, exposed to driving dust-storms in summer and to icy winds in winter—one of the dreariest and bleakest spots in the country.

Soon after the Battalion had occupied the fort, a brigade under Colonel Maclaren arrived from Kandahar on its way to Kabul, but owing to a fall of snow which made the road difficult for transport, this brigade returned to Kandahar, leaving 250 of the 43rd Bengal Native Infantry* at Kelat-i-Ghilzie. This brought the total garrison up to 950 men, viz. 600 of the 3rd Shah's Infantry, 250 of the 43rd, 43 European artillerymen, a few sappers and other details, the whole under Captain Craigie.

Very soon after the place had been occupied news arrived there of the riot in Kabul City on the 2nd November, of the murder of Sir A. Burnes, of the flocking of the tribesmen into the city, and of the strange lack of resolute action by the British authorities.

The Ghilzais were now thoroughly roused, the Kandahar-Kabul road became dangerous and the investment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie commenced.

Craigie had attached a furlough party of his Battalion to some other details, under Captain Woodburn of the 5th Shah's Infantry, which had accompanied the 3rd Shah's Infantry from Kandahar to Kelat-i-Ghilzie and then proceeded on towards Kabul. Woodburn's party totalled 130 men, and after they had passed Ghazni they were attacked by a swarm of the insurgents, through whom they fought their way to the fortified village of Saidabad. The Chief of this place was supposed to be friendly, and Woodburn gladly accepted his offer of protection within the walls. For a day and a night this place was held and

* Now the 1st Royal Battalion 9th Jat Regiment.



“ KELAUT-I-GHILJE ”

From a painting by Lt. Rattray, 2nd Bengal Grenadiers, who was with Wymer's relieving force. Under the Union Jack on the mound can be seen the five Afghan standards captured at the repulse of the assault on the 21st May, 1842.

then came tidings of the success of the insurgents at Kabul. The Chief then secretly admitted some of the enemy into the towers of his harem, which overlooked the courtyard in which the sepoys were quartered and many of the sepoys were shot down. Woodburn and some of his men defended themselves for some hours in a tower, but they were burnt out and finally the whole party was massacred.

The defences of Kelat-i-Ghilzie were found to be in a very poor condition, so Craigie at once set his men to work to improve them. He also took steps to obtain sufficient supplies to enable him to stand a protracted siege. He collected grain by purchase as far as possible, but when the Ghilzais became truculent and refused to supply more, Craigie resorted to raiding, and on several occasions drove flocks of sheep into the fort. Having obtained some mill-stones, the garrison also set to work to grind the wheat.

Two springs rising within the fort provided an ample supply of water, the existence of which on the top of this hill formed of conglomerate and sandstone is curious.

There were spacious barracks within the fort, but these had no doors, and the officers' quarters also were without doors or glass for the windows. The supply of firewood was very limited, so when the winter set in with extreme severity—the temperature sometimes fell to forty degrees below freezing point, with a strong wind blowing—the garrison suffered greatly from the cold. Craigie, however, took energetic measures to keep up the spirits and health of his men. He organized games for them and a form of relay race which he invented was later always commemorated by the 12th Pioneers at their regimental sports, under the name of the Kelat-i-Ghilzie race.

News now came of the traitorous murder of the Envoy, Sir W. Macnaghten, just outside the British cantonments at Kabul, the handing over of some British Officers as hostages and the disgraceful terms which had been made with the enemy, under which

the British army at Kabul was to evacuate the country, via the Khyber Pass, under the escort of Afghans.

Then came, at first as an uncredited rumour, the appalling report that the whole garrison of Kabul—some 4,500 fighting men and 13,000 followers—had been completely wiped out during its march towards Jalalabad.

The effect of this disgraceful and terrible disaster can be imagined; every tribesman was up in arms and thirsting to annihilate the remaining infidels.

Further unpleasant events followed on—the repulse of Wade's brigade at the entrance to the Khyber and of England's brigade near Quetta, a disaster to a small force in the Bolan Pass and the investment of Sale's brigade in Jalalabad. Then, on the 6th March, 1842, the 27th Bengal Native Infantry, after enduring a severe siege, surrendered Ghazni to the Afghans, under terms which were promptly broken.

On the 6th April, Shah Shuja was murdered at Kabul.

But at Kandahar the troops under General Nott, though they had not been paid for some months, were in good mettle and the little garrison of Kelat-i-Ghilzie had not a thought of surrender.

The Ghilzais around Kelat-i-Ghilzie at first kept at a respectful distance, occasionally resorting to sniping with their long jezails, which fired balls with considerable accuracy up to 700 yards and outranged the British muskets. Once a body of enemy horse attempted to cut off some of the garrison who were out cutting bushes for fuel, but they were foiled by the covering party; and Craigie had a few men wounded on one of his foraging expeditions.

But after the fall of Ghazni, the enemy arrived before the fort in increased numbers, investing it more closely, and when the weather became milder they commenced to entrench themselves around the place. Soon the fort was completely surrounded by three lines of hostile trenches, the nearest line being about 250 yards from it. These trenches were skilfully

constructed, full advantage being taken of natural cover, and were provided with loop-holes.

At the loop-holes the Afghans posted picked marksmen, who kept up an annoying and accurate fire on anyone who showed himself within the fort, and caused several casualties. Some of the British Officers possessed double-barrelled rifles and used to amuse themselves by sniping at the enemy, although they seldom obtained a good target except when a relief in the enemy's trenches was carried out by daylight.

So matters continued until May, by which time the garrison had been invested for six months.

Meanwhile General Nott at Kandahar had received orders to evacuate the country and retire on Sind, as soon as the weather and other conditions made this practicable. Nott was disgusted with these orders, considering that the force he had, if boldly led, could account for any number of Afghans, and he had asked to be allowed to march on Kabul to re-establish our prestige. So, in preparation for his retirement, he despatched a strong brigade of all arms, under Colonel Wymer, to relieve and bring back the garrison of Kelat-i-Ghilzie. The Afghans, having got wind of the despatch of this brigade, redoubled their efforts to capture the fort before it could arrive.

On the 20th May, Craigie noticed that the enemy were so unusually quiet that he wondered whether the greater number of them had decamped; until by means of a telescope an officer observed some of them at a distant walled village practising escalading with scaling ladders.

That night officers and men were especially alert at their posts. There was bright moonlight and the night passed with unusual quietness, until towards morning the moon went down.

The attention of an officer was then arrested by a clattering sound, and the word was passed round to be ready. Shortly afterwards the whole face of the works was assaulted by dense masses of the enemy, who owing to the darkness were within a hundred

yards before they could be seen. They came on with great boldness, shouting "Allah! Allah!" and were received with a hot musketry fire and a discharge of grape. Still they pressed on, pushing their attack with the greatest vehemence at the North-East and North-West angles of the fort, where the ascent was easiest.

The enemy, with the aid of scaling ladders, endeavoured to get over the parapet and were met with musket and bayonet, one sepoy being observed to bayonet four men. Thrice they came on boldly to the assault, planting one of their standards on the parapet, and thrice they were driven back. Only a few of them managed actually to enter the fort and these were quickly disposed of.

Soon after daybreak the enemy drew off, carrying away their wounded and many of their dead, under cover of fire from their trenches. As computed by themselves, the lowest number of assailants was stated to be 5,500 men, the highest to be 7,000.

Here is Captain Craigie's official report of the affair, dated the 21st May, 1842 :—

"I have the honour to report for the information of Major-General Nott, commanding in Lower Afghanistan and Sind, that Kelat-i-Ghilzie was attacked at a quarter before four o'clock this morning, in two places, viz. at the long neck to the N.E., and at an outwork constructed last winter by the Sepoys, to give a raking fire in rear of the barracks.

"The enemy advanced to the assault in the most determined manner, each column consisting of upwards of 2,000 men, provided with 30 scaling ladders; but after an hour's fighting they were repulsed and driven down the hill, losing five* standards (one of which was planted three times in one of the embrasures), and the whole of which are now in our possession.

"Of the enemy's loss I am unable to give any correct account, as their killed and wounded, during the greater part of the attack, were immediately taken to the rear; but one hundred and four dead bodies were left on the slope of the hill, and from 6 a.m. till 3 p.m. the enemy were employed carrying off such of their dead and wounded as had been taken to the rear.

* These five standards can be seen flying in the illustration entitled "Kelaut-i-Ghiljye."



MAJOR-GENERAL J. CRAIGIE-HALKETT, C.R.

formerly Captain J. H. Craigie, who commanded the 3rd Infantry of Shah Shuja's Contingent, which became the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie.

Lieut. Leslie's troop of Bombay European Horse Artillery.

Capt. Anderson's troop of Artillery (of the late Shah's Contingent).

Capt. Blood's 9-pounder Battery.

Detachment of Sappers (Bombay and Madras).

A company of Bengal Foot Artillery, with four 18-pounders.

The 3rd Regiment of Bombay Light Horse.

Haldane's and Christie's Horse.

Her Majesty's 40th and 41st Regiments.

The 2nd, 16th, 38th, 42nd and 43rd Regiments of Bengal Native Infantry.

The 3rd or Captain Craigie's Regiment of Irregular Infantry (of the late Shah's Contingent).

No enemy was seen until the 28th August, when Nott's cavalry was worsted in a small engagement, losing some fifty killed and wounded. On the 30th, at Gorain, 38 miles from Ghazni, 12,000 Afghans were scattered after a short action, abandoning their camp, baggage and guns, with a loss on our side of 38 killed and 66 wounded.

Ghazni was reached on the 5th September, and the Afghan position on the heights overlooking the town was immediately attacked and carried. During the night the fortress was evacuated by the enemy and the place was entered and destroyed by General Nott. On the 14th and 15th September the advance was opposed in the mountain passes near Maidan, a smart action resulting in the dispersal of the enemy. On this occasion the 3rd Infantry had five men wounded.

On the 17th September, 1842, Nott encamped within four miles of Kabul, which had been reached and occupied by Pollock one day earlier. Here the two Generals snarled at each other, whilst the British ladies and other prisoners were recovered and, as a punitive measure, the great bazaar of Kabul was destroyed.

The evacuation of the country commenced on the 12th October, Nott's Division finding the rearguard.

On the 15th and 16th October the rearguard was worried by tribesmen in the Haft Kotal Pass, where the 3rd Infantry had four men wounded. It was again attacked on the 19th at Gandamak and had troublous times on the 4th and 6th November in the Khyber Pass, where the experience gained by the 3rd Infantry under Shelton in the Narian valley stood them in good stead.

Peshawar was reached on the 8th November and the march continued through the Punjab to the Sutlej, over which it crossed into British territory near Ferozepore. It was met at the bridge by Lord Ellenborough, who had assembled a large number of troops for the ostensible purpose of welcoming the returning army, but really as a support to it whilst retiring through Sikh territory. Ceremonial parades and festivities were then held for some days to celebrate the end of this war, whilst the Afghans also were rejoicing at the return of Dost Mohomed to the throne and the departure of the British.

The honours showered upon the 3rd Battalion of Shah Shuja's Contingent have already been recorded*; in addition to which Captain J. H. Craigie† was awarded the brevet of Major and the C.B.

The medal awarded for the defence of Kelat-i-Ghilzie is remarkable amongst British war medals for having been issued to only 950 men, of whom some 600 belonged to the 3rd Infantry of the Shah's Contingent. The Battalion also received two other medals,—for Ghaznee, 1842, and Cabool, 1842. The custom of issuing one medal for a campaign, with

* *Vide* Ch. II, page 21.

† J. Halkett Craigie continued in command of the Regiment of K.I.G. until he was transferred to the 20th Bengal N.I. on the 13th January, 1852. He changed his name in 1856 to Craigie-Halkett, and on the 31st December, 1861, he was given the rank of Major-General on retirement. He died on the 5th January, 1870.

Besides the 1st Afghan War, he served in the 1st Burmese War (medal), The Gwalior campaign (bronze star), against the Kohat Pass Afridis in 1853, and commanded a force against the Aka Khel Afridis in 1855.

clasps for various engagements, was not introduced until the belated grant of the Peninsula medal in 1847.

Early in 1843 the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie marched to Agra and towards the end of that year it was detailed to join an "Army of Exercise," which was assembling on the frontier of Gwalior State. The Battalion was put into a brigade commanded by Colonel Riley.

This army had been assembled owing to troubles over the succession within the domains of the Mahratta Chief, Scindia of Gwalior, and it was subsequently ordered to invade the State to enforce the demand of the Governor-General that the Gwalior army should be reduced in size.

The Gwalior army was met at the hard-fought battle of Maharajpore on the 29th December, 1843, in which the Mahrattas, although they fought well, were decisively defeated with the loss of fifty-six guns.

Riley's brigade, however, did not take an active part in this battle, but the two flank companies of the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie were present as an escort to the Governor-General, Lord Ellenborough, who insisted on accompanying the army as a spectator. During the battle he came under fire and his escort from the Battalion had one man killed and one wounded. Other embarrassing spectators were some officers' wives*, who viewed the fighting from the backs of elephants.

The flank companies remained on escort duty with the Governor General till the end of the campaign, when Lord Ellenborough presented a massive silver "pan and atterdan" to the regiment as a memento of the occasion.

We must now return to our other battalions.

Whilst the 1st Afghan War was in progress, troops supplied from India were engaged in the 1st Chinese War, which, it is alleged, had arisen because of the

* A leading spirit amongst these ladies was Mrs. Harry Smith, the intrepid Spanish lady whom Harry Smith rescued at the storm of Badajoz, and after whom is named the town of Ladysmith in South Africa.



"ENCAMPMENT OF THE CANDAHAR FORCE UNDER GENERAL NOTT OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF CABOOL
ON THE EVACUATION OF AFGHANISTAN."

From a painting by Lieut. Rattray, 1842.

efforts of the Chinese government to exclude opium from their country, the contraband trade in which drug had brought large profits to British merchants. This amphibious campaign, remarkable for the extraordinary ease with which the small British-Indian force invariably defeated much larger Chinese armies, lasted throughout the years 1840-42, and resulted in the Chinese ceding Hong-Kong to Great Britain and agreeing to certain ports being open to foreign trade.

A detachment of the Marine Battalion was on board the Honourable Company's "Atlantis" during the first phase of the Chinese War and further detachments served in the steamers "Auckland," "Sesostris," "Akhbar," "Memnon," "Medusa" and "Ariadne," which were sent out as reinforcements.

As an aftermath of the Afghan War and because of some further treaties which were being forced upon the Amirs of Sind, fighting commenced early in 1843, which eventually led to the conquest of Sind,—a conquest so well described by Sir Charles Napier himself, as being "a very advantageous, useful and humane piece of rascality."

During this short campaign detachments of the Marine Battalion served in the flotilla on the river Indus.

In February, Major James Outram was in the city of Hyderabad, Sind, endeavouring to induce the Amirs to accept the treaties and thus avoid war, when on the 15th the Residency was attacked by eight thousand Baluchis, with six guns, commanded by Mir Shahdad Khan. The garrison of the Residency consisted of only a hundred men of the 22nd Foot. The building was protected on three sides by a wall about four feet high and on the fourth or river side by the steamer "Planet," and during the engagement the "Satellite" also arrived on the scene. Both of these boats had on board men of the Marine Battalion, of whom a few were wounded.

After keeping the assailants at bay for three hours, in which the fire from the ships materially assisted, as

ammunition was running short it was decided to evacuate the Residency and embark on the two ships. This was successfully carried out, and although the enemy brought the fire of three guns, as well as musketry, to bear on the "Planet," she managed to take off a barge which was moored to the shore.

The "Planet" and "Satellite" then sailed to Hila, where Sir Charles Napier's force was encamped.

On the 17th February was fought the battle of Miani, during which the "Comet" was the means of preventing a large body of the enemy assembled at the village of Sehwan from crossing the river to form a junction with the main Baluch-Sindi army. The night before this battle Sir Charles Napier had despatched the "Planet" and "Satellite" to set fire to a wood, in which he thought the enemy's left flank was posted, and as the enemy moved about eight miles to their right during the night, this task was executed without difficulty.

The smoke of the burning wood was visible from the battle-field next morning, and Sir Charles Napier said that he thought this circumstance had some effect on the enemy.

After the victory of Miani the force marched to Hyderabad, where an entrenched camp was formed, the river side of which was guarded by the steamers "Comet" and "Meteor." The six Amirs captured after Miani had been placed on board the "Comet."

On the 24th March, 1843, the army marched out from this camp and, after a severe action, completely defeated the enemy at the battle of Hyderabad. Then followed a certain amount of "mopping up" of the country, and by June the conquest of Sind was completed.

After his victories, Napier sent his brief despatch—"Peccavi," which, being interpreted, is "I have sinned (Sind)."

During the 1st Afghan War, the 7th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry was stationed at Mhow, whence in 1844 it marched to Baroda and shortly afterwards moved to Bombay. It was then despatched

by sea to Vingorla, where it disembarked on the 17th November, 1844, and a few days later was employed in quelling an insurrection in the State of Sawantwadi (called in the Battalion records "Warree State").

Some long marches were accomplished and the work in the jungles was harassing and fatiguing, during which, it is recorded, the men of the Battalion displayed "the firmest spirit." There was some fighting round about the hill forts of Munohur and Munsuntosh, Ensign Collier receiving two severe wounds from matchlock balls whilst leading his men in thick jungle.

On the completion of this service the Battalion returned to Bombay.

When the Sikhs invaded British territory, by crossing the Sutlej in December, 1845, the 7th Regiment Bombay N.I. was embarked hurriedly at Bombay and despatched up the Indus to Hyderabad and thence by land to Rohri, to join the army assembling there under Sir Charles Napier. To the disappointment of its commander and his men, this force was not called on to take any part in the 1st Sikh War, which came to a close in 1846.

After being stationed in various places in Sind, the Battalion was moved, via Bombay, to Ahmednagar, where it arrived on the 8th January, 1848.

The birth of another of our battalions occurred during the Sikh War period, the 28th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry being raised under orders dated the 21st January, 1846, as previously described in Chapter II.

Detachments of the Marine Battalion, amounting to 110 men, served in the ships of the Indus Flotilla during the 2nd Sikh War of 1848-49, the uneasy peace having been ruptured by the murder of two British officials by the Sikhs at Multan and by other incidents.

Although these detachments did not take any part in the great battles in the Punjab by which the Sikhs were finally overcome, yet the ships on the Indus

were often engaged with the enemy and played a useful part in the siege of Multan, seven hundred miles by river from the sea. The Flotilla prevented the enemy making use of the river and on one occasion captured a large quantity of ammunition on its way to the hostile army. A small party of seamen and marines were landed and joined the besieging army under General Whish. This party erected and worked a battery of six guns, called the Indian Navy Battery, which assisted in breaching the Delhi Gate of Multan and provided covering fire during the successful assault.

In April, 1847, the Honourable Company's steamer "Cleopatra" sailed from Bombay for Singapore and was never heard of again. Before she sailed her commander had reported that he considered her in an unfit condition, but he was ordered to sail forthwith. It is supposed that the "Cleopatra" sank in a cyclone shortly after leaving Bombay. All on board were lost, including 1 Indian Officer and 32 sepoy of the Marine Battalion.

Another of the Company's ships, the "Falkland," foundered in a hurricane in 1851, whilst on her way from Bombay to Karachi. On this occasion a Marine, by name Balnac Deepnac, who was on sentry duty over the treasure chest, stuck to his post until the vessel went down under him, and even then he contrived to save a bag of rupees under his charge.

Owing to the oppression of British and Indian merchants at Rangoon and other contraventions of the treaty signed by the Burmese after the war of 1826, culminating in the Burmese firing on British ships on the Irrawaddy, a fresh war with Burma was forced on the Indian Government, who despatched a Brigade from Bengal and another from Madras.

During this 2nd Burmese War of 1852-53, detachments of the Marine Battalion served as marines on board the Indian Navy ships "Feroze," "Moozaffer," "Berenice," "Zenobia," "Medusa" and "Sesostriis."

The first important action was the capture of



Eastern aspect.



North-Western aspect.

KELAT-I-GHILZIE IN 1879.

Reproduced from "The Life of Sir John Browne,"
by Lt.-Gen. S. McL. Innes, V.C., by permission of Messrs. John Murray.

Rangoon, which was reached on the 11th April, 1852. The war paddle-steamers, which had proceeded up the river to Rangoon, cannonaded the stockades upon both banks, destroying those on the left bank and setting fire to those on the other bank, opposite to the town, by the help of a small landing party of seamen and marines.

The Burmese batteries at first replied with vigour and several of the ships were hit, but no serious damage was done and our casualties were insignificant. The fire of the "Sesostris" against the stockades was particularly effective as the 68-pound shot which were fired from her 8-inch guns had been heated red hot in her furnaces and it was a shot from the "Sesostris" which blew up one of the enemy's magazines. Some of her guns also fired a primitive sort of shrapnel.

On the day following this successful bombardment the troops were landed from the transports, under cover of fire from the ships; the Shwe-da-gon Pagoda was stormed and the town of Rangoon captured.

During the remainder of the campaign the ships of the Indian Navy were often in action and did much useful work on the Irrawaddy, until the Burmese agreed, in June, 1853, to cede the province of Pegu as the price of peace.

Whilst the 2nd Burmese War was in progress, a small war was taking place on the North West frontier of India, known as the Black Mountain Expedition of 1852-53.

The Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie, having been moved from Rawal Pindi to various posts in Hazara, was employed in these operations. Detached companies were with various columns and the Headquarters and the remainder of the Battalion were with Colonel Mackeson's force which ascended the Black Mountain in December, 1852. At the conclusion of this little campaign the Battalion returned to Rawal Pindi, with detachments at Attock, Mari and Haripur.

On the 18th March, 1853, the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie sustained a heavy loss in the death of its

Commandant, Captain R. McKean, who had been with it ever since its formation as part of Shah Shuja's Contingent in 1838.

Now followed three years of peace for the garrison of India, except for those British units which were sent to the Crimea.

Then, the Home Government, having quarrelled with the Shah of Persia over his resumed designs on Herat, called on the Bombay Government to despatch an expedition to Persia.

The Force, consisting of 2,270 European troops, 3,400 Sepoys—all of the Bombay Army—3,750 followers, 1,150 horses and 430 bullocks, embarked in November, 1856, at Bombay, Vingorla, Porebunder and Karachi. The fleet was composed of eight war-steamers of the Indian Navy, seven hired steamers and thirty sailing ships.

To take the place of the Bombay troops sailing with the expedition, units of the Bengal Army were moved into Rajputana, thus widening the area to be affected by the fast approaching but still unsuspected eruption of 1857.

The command of the expedition was given to Sir James Outram, then in England, and until his arrival soon after the capture of Bushire, General Stalker was the temporary commander. Soon after Sir James's arrival on the scene, both General Stalker and Commodore Ethersey, the senior officer of the Indian Navy in Persian waters, committed suicide, the former, it was said, through bitter disappointment over the performance of some horses in the Bombay Races.

Two of our battalions were represented in this campaign; the Marine Battalion providing detachments on board all the warships and the Light Company of the 28th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry forming part of a Light Battalion which went out with some reinforcements early in 1857. The British Officers with the Light Company were Captain I. F. Robertson, Lieut. I. A. Nott and Ensign G. A. Atkinson. This

was the first taste of active service for the 28th Regiment.

The first shots in this war were fired on the 9th December, 1856, from the "Ajdaha," which dispersed a body of Persians near the beach some miles South of Bushire. The troops then landed and defeated the Persians at Reshire.

On the following day the fleet bombarded Bushire, which town surrendered after several of its batteries had been silenced by the ships' guns.

After the arrival of Sir James Outram and the 2nd Division, with which was the Light Battalion, the Persians were heavily defeated some miles inland at the battle of Kooshab.

In March, 1857, the fleet, with the transports, assembled in the Shat-el-Arab and proceeded up the river to attack Mohamra, which possessed formidable fortifications. At 6 a.m. on the 26th March, the "Semiramis," followed by the "Ajdaha," "Clive," "Victoria" and "Falkland" took up their stations within 800 yards of the Persian batteries and opened fire. Half-an-hour later the "Feroze" and "Assaye," passing the Southern forts, took position 300 yards from the North fort and began firing 8-inch shell, the enemy hotly returning the fire and causing some damage to the ships. After another hour of heavy firing, these two ships closed to within 60 yards of the earth-work, the remainder of the fleet also moving closer in. About 10 o'clock the magazine of the North fort blew up with great effect, when loud cheers rang out from each ship and the guns were worked with renewed vigour. Shortly afterwards three other explosions occurred and the enemy's fire began to slacken. The transports now moved up stream and commenced to land the troops, including the Light Battalion, about a mile above the forts.

The enemy, after being driven from their batteries by the fire from the ships at such short range, again returned to them and with admirable pertinacity opened fire with musketry from the batteries and

breastworks, which was replied to by the ships with grape and musketry. The ships' decks had been provided with parapets made from bundles of hay, which gave good protection to the seamen and marines, and after the fight the hay was found to contain a great number of enemy bullets.

Parties of sailors and marines from the "Seriramis," "Clive," "Victoria," and "Falkland" now landed and stormed the Southern forts, whilst at the same time a detachment from the "Assaye" occupied the North fort. The troops, including the Light Battalion, having landed from the transports, advanced through the date groves and occupied the camp with little opposition, the action of the fleet having caused the enemy to flee from the scene. The Persians confessed to a loss of 300 killed, including their gallant leader, Agha Jan Khan; the British loss was only 10 killed and 30 wounded, of whom the Marine Battalion lost 1 killed and 2 wounded.

Three steamers were sent on a reconnaissance up the Karun River to Ahwaz, where a Persian army retreated precipitately on seeing the approaching ships. There was no further fighting in Persia, as satisfactory terms of peace were arranged with the Shah's government, happily just before the outbreak of the Mutiny, the intense interest in which tragic event soon almost obliterated any memory of this short campaign in Persia.

CHAPTER VI

1857—1878

THE INDIAN MUTINY

“ ABYSSINIA ”

NO thoroughly satisfying explanation has ever been given as to why nearly the whole of the Bengal Army mutinied in 1857, whilst, with only a few isolated exceptions, the Madras and Bombay Armies remained loyal; but the following extract from a letter of Sir James Outram, Commanding the Persian Expeditionary Force, throws some light on the subject. This letter was written at Mohamra on the 27th April, 1857, some days before the actual outbreak of the Mutiny at Meerut on the 10th May.

“ The mutinous spirit displayed in the Bengal Army is a very serious matter, and is the consequence of the faulty system of its organization, so different from that of Bombay, where such insubordination is scarcely possible; for with us, the intermediate tie between the European officers and the men, i.e. the native officers, is a loyal and efficient body, selected for their superior ability, and gratefully attached to their officers in consequence. Their superior ability naturally exercises a wholesome influence over the men, among whom no mutinous spirit could be engendered without their knowledge, and the exertion of their influence to counteract it; whereas, the seniority system of the Bengal Army supplies neither able nor influential native officers—old imbeciles merely, possessing no control over the men, and owing no gratitude to their officers or to the Government, for a position which is merely the result of seniority in the service.

“ I pointed this out to Lord Dalhousie once, who told me he had seriously considered the matter, and had consulted some of the highest officers of the Bengal Army, who, one and all, deprecated any attempt to change the system as a dangerous innovation. Whatever the danger, it should be incurred, the change being gradually introduced; for, as at present constituted, the Bengal Army never can be depended on.”

All the European troops in Persia were hurriedly returned to India, to take their part in quelling the Mutiny; the Indian troops remained behind for some time to insure that the terms of the treaty were carried out, except the Light Battalion, which was embarked with the Europeans, as it was considered that it would be detrimental to the ten regiments of the Bombay Army, from which it was formed, each to be deprived of an entire company and three British officers.

All the four battalions, later to become Bombay Pioneers, remained loyal during the Indian Mutiny, which perhaps is not a very remarkable fact as regards the three Bombay regiments, but is a matter of special pride in the case of that then irregular Bengal unit—The Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie.

Of the 10 regular cavalry regiments and 74 regular infantry battalions of the Bengal Army existing in 1857, only three units proved reliable; all the remainder either mutinied or were 'disarmed, the percentage of staunchness in the irregular Bengal units being a little better.

The chief difference between regular and irregular units of the Bengal Army was in the number of their British officers, regular battalions having twenty-six on their establishment and irregular only four, the Indian officers of the latter thus having greater scope and responsibility.

A separate account of each of our four battalions during the Mutiny years of 1857-58 is now given :—

THE REGIMENT OF KELAT-I-GHILZIE, commanded by Captain Munday, was at Shabkadr, a frontier fort on the Mohmund border near Peshawar, with detachments at Michni and Abozai. When the news of the outbreak of Mutiny at Meerut and Delhi reached Peshawar, the 64th Regiment Bengal N.I. which was the worst dispositioned of the units in the garrison, was despatched to the Shabkadr outposts, thus exposing the men of the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie to attempts to inveigle them from their loyalty. Other seditious agents were also at work on the frontier,

amongst whom were some sent out from the colony of Hindustani Fanatics at Sitana.

It is remarkable that the sepoy of the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie remained uncontaminated when it is considered that they were recruited from the same classes as other Bengal units—Rajputs, Hindustani Mussalmans, Brahmins from Oudh—a number of them having the patronymic of Pandé, from which word the British soldier evolved the nickname of “Pandy”* for a mutineer.

The garrison at Peshawar consisted of two British Infantry battalions, some batteries, one Bengal Cavalry regiment and four Bengal Infantry battalions, and evidence existed that all but one of the native regiments were rotten with sedition. On the 22nd May the cavalry and three infantry battalions were ceremoniously disarmed, only the 21st Regiment Bengal N.I. being allowed to retain its arms and do duty. This bold action had an excellent effect on the frontier tribesmen and fortunately the Afghans showed no inclination to take advantage of our difficulties.

On the 25th May the 55th Bengal N.I. mutinied at Mardan, where they had been sent from Nowshera to take the place of the Guide Corps who had commenced their famous march to Delhi. Most of the mutineers made off towards the frontier, some being killed or captured by pursuing mounted police under Nicholson. Some deserters from the disarmed regiments at Peshawar had also made their way towards the frontier, and the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie rounded up and sent into Peshawar a number of these fugitives, most of the remainder being either killed or enslaved by the tribesmen. Of the prisoners sent into Peshawar, 40 were blown from the guns on a parade held on the 10th June. Soon after this the detachments of the 64th at Shabkadr, Michni and Abozai were disarmed, a column of British troops having been sent out to assist.

The following Divisional Order by Brigadier-

* There is a book about the Mutiny called “Up amongst the Pandies.”

General Sydney Cotton was issued on the 3rd June, 1857 :—

“It having become necessary to issue orders for the disarming of the native troops, consequent on unfavourable reports being received by the Civil and Military authorities, the Brigadier commanding the Peshawar Division has the greatest pleasure in exempting the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie. In no instance has a breath of suspicion as to the fidelity of that corps been entertained. On the contrary, all concur in stating that the Kelat-i-Ghilzie Regiment is, and has been, loyal and true to the Government under which it serves. The Brigadier commanding the Peshawar Division, in placing on record in public orders this favourable testimonial, desires that Captain Munday, the European and Native Officers, non-commissioned officers and men may be assured that the Authorities, duly appreciating the value of their services, have the most perfect confidence in the loyalty of the Corps.”

For their conspicuous loyalty and good services during this crisis, Subadars Samand Shah and Manbodh Pandé were awarded the Order of British India, and, later on, all ranks of the regiment received the Indian Mutiny medal.

In January, 1858, the Battalion marched into Peshawar, and after being there for three months, it was ordered on service under Sir Sydney Cotton against the Hindustani Fanatics of Sitana, and Mukurrat Khan of Panjtar, a troublesome chief of the Khudu Khel.

The operations commenced on the 25th April and by the 3rd May Sitana had been taken. Though severe loss was inflicted on the Hindustani Fanatics, who fought doggedly and well, yet it was considered at the time that the penalty exacted was insufficient. For his services in this campaign Lieut. Rowcroft, of the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie, was mentioned in despatches. The battalion then returned to Peshawar and later was employed as an escort to the



THE 7TH AND 28TH REGIMENTS OF BOMBAY NATIVE INFANTRY, 1846.

- L. to R. Havildar, Battalion company of 7th N.I. (cold weather dress).
Native Officer, Light company of 28th N.I.
Subaltern, Grenadier company of 7th N.I. (undress).
Field-Officer of 28th N.I. (full-dress).

Commander-in-Chief, Lord Clyde (formerly Sir Colin Campbell), during his tour in the North-West Provinces, Oudh and the Punjab, thus showing through all that countryside a Bengal Regiment which had remained loyal.

THE MARINE BATTALION, with its headquarters in the Marine Lines, Bombay, under the command of Major C. M. Barrow, had many detachments away in the Honourable Company's cruisers and with the Indus Flotilla. Although the Battalion as a whole was loyal throughout the Mutiny, there was one regrettable incident. During the monsoon of 1857 the Commissioner of Police, Bombay—Mr. C. Forjett*—received reports that a few sepoys of the Marine Battalion and of the other two Native Infantry battalions stationed in Bombay were meeting in the house of a priest and physician named Ganga Prasad, and Mr. Forjett felt sure that these meetings were seditious, though at first he had no direct evidence.

Mr. Forjett managed to abduct Ganga Prasad from his house at night and forced him to reveal the details of the plot. The story told by the priest was that he had some men of the three battalions under his influence and that their plot was to bring about a rising at the approaching Dewali festival, when it was expected they would be joined by many of the more lawless inhabitants of the city, to murder all those who opposed them, to pillage Bombay and then to march to Poona and proclaim the Nana Sahib as Peshwa of the Deccan.

Mr. Forjett went to Major Barrow, who was at first incredulous, but agreed to investigate the matter. Forjett, Barrow and another officer then disguised themselves and went to Ganga Prasad's house in the city, where they concealed themselves in a small room which was divided from the main room by a thin plastered wall with some holes in it. Here they

* Mr. Forjett's son later served in the Marine Battalion and commanded it in 1890-94.

overheard the seditious talk at several meetings and identified the culprits.

The treacherous soldiers having been arrested and tried by court-martial, Drill Havildar Syed Hussain, of the Marine Battalion, and a sepoy of another battalion were sentenced to be blown from a gun and several other sepoys received sentences of penal servitude. An Indian Officer of the Marine Battalion was also tried by the same Court-Martial for being present at the meetings, but was found not guilty and acquitted.

The sentences of being blown from a gun were duly carried out on the 15th September, 1857, at a General Parade* of the garrison on the Bombay "maidan," before a large crowd of Europeans and Indians.

The Indian Navy did useful work during the Mutiny in transporting troops and providing armed parties on shore at Calcutta and other ports. Several detachments landed from the ships, under officers of the Indian Navy, also served up country, doing good service at Dacca and on an expedition in the Abor country.

At Multan a small detachment of the Marine Battalion, landed from a steamer of the Indus Flotilla, distinguished itself. The 62nd and 69th Bengal Native Infantry, though disarmed at Multan in June, 1857, were still a source of anxiety, as other troops had to be employed to watch them. It was decided to disband these regiments and to send the men in batches to their homes. Shortly after the sepoys had been informed of this decision, they suddenly rose on the morning of the 31st August, 1858, and with any weapons they could get hold of attacked the Europeans and loyal Indians. In the sudden surprise a British Officer and several others were killed.

In a house a mile from the cantonments was living Lieut. Holt, Indian Navy, with his wife and child.

* A picture of this gruesome parade appears in a contemporary number of "The Illustrated London News" (page 525 of vol. for 1857).

He was Assistant Magistrate and Port Officer at Multan, and his house, which contained a treasure chest, was guarded by a Naik and several men of the Marine Battalion. A party of the mutineers made a desperate attack on this house, which was resolutely defended for two hours by the marines, who killed twenty-six of their assailants. Mrs. Holt died shortly afterwards from shock caused by the scenes she had witnessed during this fight. Meanwhile in the cantonment the British troops and the 11th Punjab Irregular Infantry had killed many of the rebels, but the bulk of them escaped from Multan and made for the Sutlej, hoping to find asylum in Bhawalpur State. The river was in flood and some of the fugitives were drowned, most of the rest being killed or captured by pursuing troops or by villagers. Of the 1,323 men who rose, only 157 remained unaccounted for.

All the men of the Marine Battalion who formed the guard on Lieut. Holt's house were rewarded by promotion and received the Mutiny medal, and Naik Sonnac Dhonnac and Lance-Naik Ramnac Babnac were also awarded the 3rd Class of the Order of Merit.

In 1858 the Waghers, a piratical tribe of the Kathiawar coast, stirred into action by the general unrest of the Mutiny, seized a fort on the island of Beyt. On the 3rd April they repulsed with the loss of six killed and twenty-six wounded, including three officers, a party consisting of two companies of the 10th Bombay N.I. and a detachment of the Marine Battalion, which while proceeding from Karachi to Surat in the "Prince Arthur," landed and unsuccessfully attempted to capture this fort by escalade.

The Waghers then obtained control of a large tract of country in Kathiawar, occupying the strong fort of Dwarka, and it was not till September, 1859, that the Bombay Government sent an expedition under Colonel Donovan against them. The force consisted of the 28th Foot, some artillery and sappers, the 6th Bombay Native Infantry and Lieut. Roberts, 4 Indian Officers

and 200 men of the Marine Battalion. Seven ships of the Indian Navy and three transports also formed an important part of the expedition.

On arrival at Beyt, the fort was first bombarded by the ships and then an attempt was made to storm the place, which was, however, unsuccessful, owing to the heavy fire from the loopholes of the fort. The bombardment was then resumed and during the night the Waghers evacuated the fort, which was occupied by the attacking force the following morning. Our casualties were 2 officers and 22 men killed, and 2 officers and 45 men wounded, of whom the Marine Battalion lost 1 killed and 2 wounded.

The expedition then proceeded to the reduction of Dwarka, and this place was surrounded and bombarded from land and sea. The Waghers fought with much spirit and made several sorties, but after two of their outlying forts had been captured they decided to cut their way out of the town. At night "they* attempted to cut through the Naval Brigade, but being there defeated, they passed on to the Marine Battalion, who were also on the alert, but going farther along the line, where the sentries were not so close, they got away through the 28th Regiment, and, not being followed up till morning, escaped into the boggy ground of the Gulf of Catch."

It required a further expedition to the Burda Hills before this tribe was finally subdued.

The Mutiny medal was not granted to the troops employed in suppressing this rebellion in Kathiawar, which caused some disappointment.

THE 7TH REGIMENT OF BOMBAY NATIVE INFANTRY, commanded by Major E. Andrews, was moved from Nassirabad to Ahmedabad early in 1857, to take the place of troops who had gone to the Persian War.

The Bombay units at Nassirabad were relieved by two battalions and a battery of the Bengal Army, all of whom mutinied on the 28th May and marched

* Extract from a letter of Lieut. G. C. Sconce, Indian Navy.

to Delhi, where they were known as the Nassirabad Brigade.

When news of the outbreak of the Mutiny at Meerut and Delhi reached Ahmedabad, the 7th Regiment were ordered to be ready to march at a moment's notice, and they had high hopes of being used against the main force of the mutineers at Delhi; but in consequence of it being found impractical to denude the station of troops, these orders were countermanded. The Regiment, however, received the thanks of Government for the alacrity with which it prepared to march.

In June a sepoy of the Battalion was accused by a man of the 2nd Grenadier Regiment, which was also stationed at Ahmedabad, of having made use of seditious language, but a Court of Enquiry found that these charges were utterly false.

From the 8th July, 1857, till the 14th January, 1858, a Field Force under the command of Major E. Andrews, 7th N.I., consisting of 350

Capt. Collier.

Lt. Campbell.

„ Sanders.

„ Fulton.

„ Cunningham.

men of his own Battalion, 2 guns of the 3rd Battalion Artillery (Golundaz), and 100 Guzerat Irregular Horse, were employed against in-

surgent Bheels, Waliatis and Mewatis in the Myhe and Rewa Kanta. This force had a number of small engagements with the insurgents and accomplished some long marches, one of which was 48 miles in 28 hours with three skirmishes.

The command of that portion of the Battalion left at Ahmedabad devolved on Lieut. and Adjutant Widdicombe. At this time the only European troops in the station were one company of H.M.'s 83rd Regiment, and they were located two miles from the Native Lines.

On the night of the 15th September, 1857, some of the 2nd Grenadier Regiment, whose Lines were adjacent to those of the 7th, broke out into open mutiny and unsuccessfully tried to induce the men of the Native Artillery to join them.

The Quarter Guard of the 7th Regiment, commanded by Havildar Francis, at once turned out, and set on some of the mutineers, capturing several. Drummer Bapoo Powar, armed only with his small drummer's sword, engaged in single combat with a mutineer carrying a sword and captured him. During the night about 30 mutineers were captured and about the same number deserted from the station. Of those captured eighteen were executed.

During the trial the mutineers stated that they had made no overtures to the men of the 7th Regiment, as they were afraid to trust them and had no confidence in them.

For their prompt action and courage on the night of the 15th September, Havildar Francis was promoted to Jemadar, Drummer Bapoo Powar to Havildar and Sepoy Lalla Pursad Tiwari to Naik.

Detachments of the Battalion were employed in collecting surrendered arms and escorting prisoners until the end of March, 1858, when the 7th were transferred to Bombay.

THE 28TH REGIMENT OF BOMBAY NATIVE INFANTRY, commanded by Lt.-Col. J. B. Bellasis, was stationed throughout the Mutiny period at Dharwar, where on the 8th July, 1857, its Light Company rejoined from Persia.

Dharwar is in the Southern Mahratta Country, which was in a state of brooding discontent owing to the recent confiscation of many estates under the Inam Commission and to Government's refusal to recognize the legality of the ancient custom of the adoption of heirs. In the turmoil caused by the Mutiny, the chieftains saw their opportunity for successful rebellion, especially if the troops stationed in their part of the country could be induced to follow the example of those in Bengal.

At Kolhapur a portion of the 27th Bombay Native Infantry mutinied and killed several of their officers. This regiment was subsequently disarmed and a rising in Kolhapur city suppressed by the resolute

action of Colonel G. le Grand Jacob, with a handful of troops.

It was discovered that some correspondence had been passing between the mutineers of the 27th at Kolhapur and some men of the 28th at Dharwar, as also with another Native battalion at Belgaum. It is probable that the conspiracy in Bombay City to proclaim the Nana as Peshwa of the Deccan was linked up with the rebellions in the Southern Mahratta states, and emissaries from the North West of India had also been sent to stir up trouble in the South. However, the 28th as a whole resisted these temptations and remained staunch.

The headquarters of one of the rebellions in this part of the country was at the fortified village of Halgalli. On the 29th November, 1857, Colonel G. Malcolm led his own regiment, the Southern Mahratta Horse, and one company of the 28th Bombay N.I. against this place. The British Officers with this company were Lieut. Duncan and Ensign Farquhasson. The Cavalry having quickly cleared the country, drove some eight hundred rebels into the village, where a sharp struggle ensued in the narrow streets. Lieut. Duncan then led his company in a scramble over the flat-roofed houses, dashed upon the rebels and decided the victory. This company of the 28th had only two men wounded.

On the 27th May, 1858, the petty Chief of Nargund, whose artillery consisted of three rusty cannon and a swivel gun, formally declared war against the British Government. Some of his followers plundered the treasury of one of the district stations of Dharwar and a political officer, Mr. Manson, was killed whilst on his way to interview the Chief at Nargund. Colonel Malcolm, with 250 of the Southern Mahratta Horse, two companies of British Infantry and the Grenadier company of the 28th Bombay N.I. (Lieut. Heisch), marched for Nargund, before which place they arrived five days after the declaration of war.

Much to Malcolm's delight, the rebel force marched

out of the town to meet him. The British force attacked, overthrew the rebels—who, however, fought well in groups—drove them back with much slaughter, followed them up into the town and forced the surviving combatants to take refuge in the fort.

There remained now only the fort, which was such a strong one, that if defended, it might have caused much trouble to the small assailing force. But Malcolm knew his antagonists well. "Give them a quiet night," he said, "and they will save us the trouble." He was right. On the morning of the 2nd of June this fort, one of the strongest in the Southern Mahratta country, was found to be deserted. The Chief of Nargund was captured on the night of the 3rd, and later was tried and executed. Sad to relate, the Chief's mother and wife drowned themselves in the Malpurga.

The Sawantwadi insurgents of 1844-45*, who had sought refuge in Portuguese territory and, when all was quiet, had returned across the border, again, in February, 1858, broke out into revolt, harassed the country and levied war in the name of the Peshwa Nana Sahib. Some of the absconded mutineers of the 27th Native Infantry joined these rebels, who caused a good deal of trouble in the wild country on the Goa border.

Four companies of the 28th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry were detached from Dharwar to form part of the small mixed force of Bombay, Madras and Goanese troops operating in the Sawantwadi jungles and it was not until the 20th November that the last remaining band of Sawant rebels, reduced to a strength of eighty men, surrendered to the Governor of Goa and were transported to the Portuguese portion of the island of Timor.

An officer of the 28th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry—Lieut. J. Watson—raised the 4th Irregular Sikh Cavalry at Lahore in 1858, and for his services

Capt. Robertson.
 " Hewett.
 Lt. Nott.
 " West.
 Ens. Remacher.

* *Vide* page 97.



THE MARINE BATTALION.

1863.

A group taken in the early days of photography. 5, Major Thacker.
 1, Drummer. 2, Native Adjutant. 3, Lt. Lyons. 4, Lt. Stevens.
 6, Lt. Wilson. 7, Lt. Charles. 8, Sub. Maj. 9, Recruit boy. 10, Bugler. 11, Private.
 12, 13, 14, Havildars.

during the Mutiny was awarded the brevet of Major and the C.B. His name still survives in the present title of the regiment—The 6th Duke of Connaught's Own Lancers (Watson's Horse).

All ranks of the 28th Regiment who were present at the capture of Halgalli and Nargund received the Mutiny medal.

The demise of the old Honourable East India Company and the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India had a good effect on the status of Indian troops and helped to break down the unhappy feelings which sometimes used to exist between the officers of "Queen's regiments" and those of "The Company." Soon after the Mutiny the system by which officers joined the strangely named "Staff Corps" was introduced, together with other changes in organization.

The Mutiny was hardly over when the 2nd Chinese War commenced. In June, 1859, a Naval force, which was trying to enforce the terms of a treaty, suffered a severe reverse before the Taku forts at the mouth of the Pei-ho. Four British gunboats were sunk by the accurate fire of the Chinese guns, the Admiral was severely wounded, 31 out of the crew of 40 of the gunboat in which he was being hit, and a landing party was repulsed with very heavy casualties. This event made war inevitable.

In the campaign a French Naval and Military force co-operated with the British expedition, which was sent out from India; and the war closed with the occupation of Peking, where satisfactory terms were enforced on the Chinese government.

Detachments of the Marine Battalion, amounting in all to about sixty men, served as marines in several ships of the Indian Navy throughout the 2nd Chinese War and were present at the landing at the mouth of the Pei-tang-ho, previous to the capture of the Taku forts.

This campaign was the last in which men of the Battalion were to serve as marines, for the Government

now began to consider the abolition of the Indian Navy, and as a preliminary step in 1861 ordered the withdrawal of the detachments of marines serving on board the ships of the Indian Navy, and also the reduction of the strength of the Marine Battalion to eight companies and to a total strength of 750 of all ranks. It was ordered that "the Marine Battalion be brought into the line of Native Infantry Regiments and be designated the 21st Regiment of Native Infantry or Marine Battalion."

On the 30th April, 1863, the gallant old Indian Navy ceased to exist.

Although no longer marines, except by name, the Battalion being permanently stationed in Bombay was frequently called on to provide men for such duties as guards to the Political Officers at Baghdad and in the Persian Gulf, as escort to convicts whilst being transported to the Andaman Islands and as a guard of honour to the Viceroy during a tour in Burma.

The Marine Battalion, however, continued for a number of years to provide guards in some ships of the Indian Marine and also in a few gunboats of the Royal Navy; for instance, a detachment, numbering 102 men under an Indian Officer, was in H.M.S. "Coromandel" during her cruise in the Persian Gulf early in 1866, and in November of that year a party of 16 men of the Marine Battalion returning from the Gulf in H.M.S. "Berenice" was burnt out of that vessel when she was totally destroyed by an accidental fire. Small detachments, later on, did duty in the ironclads "Abyssinia" and "Magdala."

In 1865 a party of two N.C.O.s and ten men, selected from many of the Marine Battalion who volunteered for the work, accompanied Dr. David Livingstone on part of his famous exploring expedition to Central Africa. The death of all the camels which accompanied the expedition was attributed to the bad management of these sepoys, despite the fact that they had passed through country infested by the then little known tsetse fly. Altogether the experiment of employing

sepoys for this purpose was not a success and native Africans were found to be more suitable.

On the reconstitution of the Bengal Army after the Mutiny, in 1861 the irregular Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie was brought into the line and became the 12th Regiment* of Bengal Native Infantry. The Battalion was quartered at Delhi and Cawnpore until the 21st September, 1864, when, under Lt.-Col. Stevens, it moved, via Calcutta, to the North Eastern Frontier on account of trouble with Bhutan.

Whilst on its way up country by river in troop-flats, it encountered the full force of an exceptionally violent cyclone and only with difficulty escaped disaster.

On arrival in Assam, the Headquarters of the 12th were located at Jogi Gopi, with a Wing at Gauhatti and three companies at Goalpara, all in support of small columns of troops about to advance into Bhutan.

The trouble with Bhutan had started early in 1864, when an Envoy—Mr. Eden—sent by the Indian Government, was insulted and maltreated by the Bhutias, and was compelled to sign a treaty ceding to Bhutan a large tract of our territory in the Duars.

The Indian Government promptly repudiated this treaty, as it had been signed under compulsion, and sent four small columns to seize the mountain passes just within the borders of Bhutan, a wing of the 12th being with one of these columns. After this had been accomplished, with trifling opposition, the Duars of Bengal and Assam were annexed up to and including the posts on the passes. Small garrisons were left in these posts, the rest of the force being withdrawn, as it was generally believed that all operations were finished.

The Bhutias, however, had at first been unprepared and the advance of our troops had taken them by surprise, but now finding that we made no further move and that the garrisons of the captured positions

* *Vide* page 22 and Appendix 1.

used little vigilance, they assembled in considerable numbers and prepared to take the offensive.

Before resorting to force, the Bhutias tried the effect of intimidation, and this is an extract from a letter sent to the Officer Commanding our troops :—

“It will be best for you to go back to your own country without doing any more harm to ours. If you will not go, then I shall send the divine force of twelve gods, as per margin, who are very ferocious ghosts.”

The names of the twelve gods duly appeared in the margin of the original letter.

These threats were taken too lightly. Suddenly and almost simultaneously the positions in the hills occupied by our troops were attacked by the Bhutias. Two posts held out but the garrisons of the other two were compelled to retreat to the plains. The retreat from Dewangiri was particularly precipitate, two guns, the sick and wounded of the garrison and all the stores falling into the enemy's hands.

The 12th, however, had no men in the garrisons of any of these hill posts, but the retreating troops fell back on the supporting positions held by our battalion in the plains.

After this reverse, measures were at once taken to reinforce the troops in the field and soon a force of some 4,000 combatants, which included the 12th (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment, were assembled under the command of Major-General Sir H. Tombs, V.C., at Koomrakatta, six miles from the foot of the Bhutan mountains.

On the 14th March, 1865, a company of the 12th, under Lieut. Oldham, together with one of the 44th Bengal Infantry, were sent to reconnoitre the Guragoan Pass and had a smart skirmish with the Bhutias, returning after several hours with a loss of one killed and twelve wounded, most of whom were men of the 12th, who were conspicuous in their scarlet coats, whilst the 44th men being dressed in

rifle green were less noticeable and had fewer casualties.

For his gallantry on this occasion, Sepoy Mughal Khan, of the 12th, was awarded the Order of Merit.

On the 21st March, three companies of the 12th formed part of another column sent to reconnoitre the Duranga Pass. This column came suddenly upon an enemy stockade, which was captured and destroyed after a short fight, our casualties being nine wounded, some by arrows.

The main advance on Dewangiri, via the Duranga Pass, commenced on the 1st April, General Tombs's force consisting of a battery of Royal Artillery, the Eurasian Battery, a Wing of H.M.'s 55th Foot, the 12th (K.I.G.) Regiment, the 29th Punjab Infantry and the 44th Bengal Infantry.

The Advanced Guard, under Colonel Richardson, was composed of 700 men drawn from all units, the 12th supplying 150 under Major Price. The Duranga Pass is very narrow in parts, with precipitous sides, but the Bhutias put up no serious resistance in the Pass and evacuated several stockades after a few shells had been fired. On emerging at the top of the Pass, the Advanced Guard halted until joined by the main body.

At 7 a.m. on the following morning, the whole force advanced against Dewangiri, which was perched on a mountain ridge, protected by stockades and strongly held by the Bhutias. The skirmishers were sent forward, whilst the artillery commenced to shell the stockades; their fire, however, was very wild, and nearly all the shells either burst short or went over the stockades, producing no effect whatever. Still the infantry skirmishers pressed forward, keeping up a brisk fire, and the whole hillside was soon dotted over with the scarlet coats of H.M.'s 55th Foot and the 12th (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment, the dark green uniforms of the Gurkhas of the 44th and the khaki of the Punjabis. The enemy's fire soon slackened, many of their men having been shot through the

loop-holes, chiefly by the accurate fire of the skirmishers of the 55th Foot; and orders were given for the storming parties from the native regiments to advance.

One party attempted to storm the stockade on the right, but was driven back. Another party, advancing against the centre stockade, at first found it difficult of entrance, until three British Officers led the way into it by climbing over the top, and the troops poured in after them.

An indiscriminate slaughter of the defenders then commenced, which the British Officers did what they could to arrest, but their efforts were not very successful, as nearly the whole of the garrison of this stockade were killed.

After the fall of the centre stockade, the enemy evacuated the others and made their escape, and Dewangiri was occupied by General Tombs's force.

Our loss was less than forty men killed and wounded, including four British Officers wounded, the share of the 12th being twenty-one casualties.

Lt.-Colonel Stevens was mentioned in General Tombs's despatch, the work of his Battalion being highly commended, and three sepoy received the Order of Merit for their conduct during the assault on Dewangiri.

Sepoy Ram Sahai.
 „ Kharak Singh.
 „ Akhmat Khan.

This action terminated this petty campaign against these quaint people. At first, explained an important Lama, the Bhutias were very bold and confident of success, and laughed at the idea of troops, clothed as ours were, being able to cope successfully with those partially clad in armour. Now, however, he said, their opinion was entirely changed, as they had come to the conclusion that it was no use killing our people, because the more they killed the faster the others came on: a mode of warfare which they neither understood, nor considered altogether fair—the more so, as we encourage our men to this by the sound of bugles at times, when, in accordance with the notions of war in Bhutan, it was our duty to retire defeated,

after the occurrence of a few casualties. Under these circumstances, the Bhutias were of opinion that the time had come for ending a war conducted in such an unreasonable manner.

On the 6th April, the force returned to Koomrakatta and soon afterwards the 12th proceeded to Tezpur, with several companies at Gauhatti, in which stations over 200 men of the Battalion died from malaria fever. Nevertheless in October the Battalion concentrated at Gauhatti and again marched up the Duranga Pass to Dewangiri, because of further trouble being anticipated with Bhutan. When this had blown over, the 12th moved early in 1866 to Doranda for six months, and thence to Jubbulpore.

Our scene now shifts to Africa, as in July, 1867, the Secretary of State for India had telegraphed to the Governor of Bombay to despatch an expedition to Abyssinia.

The main cause of this action was the refusal of Theodore, Emperor of Ethiopia, to release the British Consul and some other Europeans, whom he had loaded with chains and imprisoned in his stronghold of Magdala.

The difficult task before Sir Robert Napier, who was appointed to command the expedition, was to land on the coast of the Red Sea, then to cross an almost waterless desert to the foot of the Abyssinian plateau, and to march for some 400 miles through mountainous and little known country to the fortress of Magdala, nearly ten thousand feet above sea-level.

On the 15th September, 1867, he despatched from Bombay a reconnoitring party of ten officers, commanded by Colonel Merewether, to select a landing place, reconnoitre routes, and make preparations for the disembarkation of the army.

The escort sent with this party was one company of the Marine Battalion, under Lieut. Becke,* and 40 men of the 3rd Bombay Cavalry.

* Captain J. Becke died whilst on special duty at Jhelum in October, 1879. In his memory the European community of Bombay presented to

The Reconnoitring Party fixed on Annesley Bay, thirty miles South of Massowah, as the most suitable landing place and then busied themselves on finding sites for camps, reconnoitring routes into Abyssinia, sinking wells, improving tracks, building piers and so forth.

The local inhabitants being friendly, there was little protective work for the escort to do, so the men of the Marine Battalion were used as working parties on these preparations—a foretaste of their future rôle as a Pioneer battalion—and they laboured in the hot and thirsty wilderness with much enthusiasm, soon becoming quite skilful at the work.

On the 21st October transports carrying “the Advanced Brigade” arrived and the troops were disembarked with much difficulty, but after more piers had been constructed subsequent arrivals found things easier.

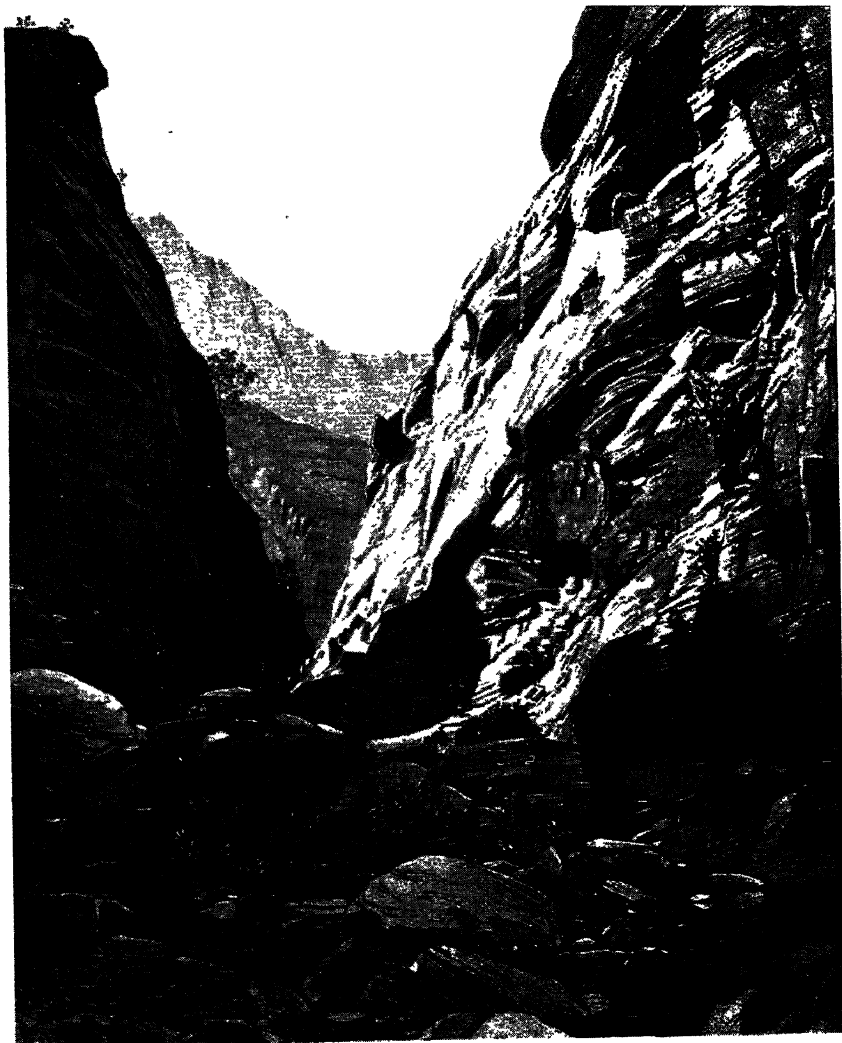
After a considerable muddle in the organization of the transport, it was decided to obtain N.C.O.s and men from Indian regiments to take charge of the smaller units of the transport and to instil some discipline into the personnel engaged with the animals.

Twenty-three N.C.O.s and men were sent for duty with the Land Transport Corps in Abyssinia from the 7th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry, which was stationed at Aden at this time. These men did useful work in this campaign, as the force depended so much on the efficiency of the transport, all supplies having to be carried from the base over very rugged mountain tracks.

The army duly accomplished its difficult march, and after heavily defeating the Abyssinians at Aroge, a few miles from Magdala, easily stormed that fortress, Theodore committing suicide as the British troops entered his stronghold.

The company of the Marine Battalion did not

the Marine Battalion the handsome “Becke Cup,” on which is embossed a portrait of this officer, and also “The Becke Memorial Fund,” the interest on which was used to provide musketry prizes for men of the Battalion.



THE DEVIL'S STANDFAST. GEORGE I

Reproduced from "The Expedition to Abyssinia," by permission of the
Controller, H.M. Stationery Office.

accompany the advance or see any fighting, as it was employed on the line of communication, where it did the indispensable, if inglorious, work of helping to keep the road fit for use.

By the 16th June, 1868, this company was back with its Battalion at Bombay, its only loss having been thirteen men died from disease. Subadar Shaik Nathoo was awarded the Order of British India, with the title of "Bahadur." The following is an extract from the Despatch of Sir Robert Napier (soon afterwards Lord Napier of Magdala):—

"Lieutenant Becke's Company of the Bombay Marine Battalion was the first party of Infantry in Abyssinia, amongst the earliest labourers in the Sooroo Defile, and throughout the campaign performed most valuable services as Pioneers, in sinking wells and opening and maintaining the road to Senafe."

The next ten years were passed by all our four battalions in the usual routine of peace time, the only outstanding event being the presentation of new Colours to the Marine Battalion by H.R.H. The Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII) on the 16th November, 1875.

CHAPTER VII

1878—1896

“ KANDAHAR ” “ AFGHANISTAN, 1878-80 ”
 “ TOFREK ” “ SUAKIN, 1885 ” “ BURMA, 1885-87 ”

A GAIN the dreary wastes of Afghanistan provide the scenery for this story.

The Amir, Sher Ali, long dissatisfied with his relations with the Indian Government, had been aggrieved by its acquisition of Quetta in 1876, and turning his face in displeasure from Calcutta, he had received a Russian embassy. As soon as this became known, the British Cabinet in London insisted upon his receiving an English Envoy. The mission was turned back in the Khyber Pass, and war was declared.

Three columns invaded the country by way of the Khyber, the Kurram and Quetta, all three crossing the frontier on the 21st November, 1878.

The small force at Quetta at first advanced only just beyond the frontier at Kuchlak and occupied Pishin. It then awaited reinforcements.

The 12th (The Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry, commanded by Colonel Price, which recently had suffered much from fever, was moved in October, 1878, from Jullundur to Multan, to form part of the Kandahar Field Force. It marched thence, via Mithankot and Lehri, to Quetta, where it arrived on the 23rd December, and was put into the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division of General Sir Donald Stewart's force.

The Kandahar Field Force then advanced and crossed the Kwaja Amran range, the 1st Division by the Gwaja Pass and the 2nd by the Khojak, and

concentrated by converging tracks on the plain beyond.

With the exception of a cavalry skirmish, no opposition was met, and on the 9th January, 1879, General Stewart made a ceremonial march through the streets of Kandahar, being received with the same scowling looks from the inhabitants as had greeted that other triumphal entry into the city in 1839.

This procession did not enter the city till 4.30 p.m., having been delayed by the numerous irrigation cuts outside the walls, and whilst passing through the streets the leading troops took a wrong turning into a cul-de-sac, which caused some loss of dignity. It was not until 9.30 p.m. that the rear of the column got safely out of the labyrinth of streets to the camp which was being formed on the N.E. of the city, to find that much of the transport had not yet arrived and that many of the troops could get no rations that night.

The next day General Stewart detached a small mixed force as a garrison within the city, of which four companies of the 12th formed a part.

Meanwhile the other two invading columns had been having a more exciting time, as both had met with some opposition. The Kurram Force, under General Roberts, had carried the Peiwar Kotal after a sharp fight and a strenuous climb and had then occupied the Shutargardan Pass; whilst the Khyber Force, under Sir Sam Browne, had to overcome some resistance before taking possession of the fort of Ali Masjid. It had then advanced as far as Jallalabad.

General Stewart decided to send his 2nd Division to Giriskh* on the Helmund River, with a vague idea that later on it might proceed to Herat, and personally to take the 1st Division to Kelat-i-Ghilzie. The headquarters and four companies of the 12th (The Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment were with the 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division, its other companies remaining in Kandahar.

The march towards Kelat-i-Ghilzie started on the

* *Vide* Map No. 4.

9th January, 1879, the Cavalry Brigade being a day's march ahead of the 2nd Brigade, and the 1st Brigade following at a day's march in rear. This rear Brigade only marched part of the way, when it was halted owing to heavy losses amongst the camels. The weather was very cold, with occasional snow showers, and as the men had received no warm clothing and the Indian troops were on short rations, the march was far from being a pleasure trip.

On the 20th January the cavalry reached Kelat-i-Ghilzie, to find that the Afghan garrison had vacated the fort and retired to Ghazni, though reports said they had intended to hold the place.

Two days later General Stewart and the 2nd Brigade arrived and the 12th (The Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment again occupied the fort from which they had obtained their name. The fortifications had been considerably strengthened since the Regiment had partially dismantled them on leaving the place in 1842.

Although so many years had elapsed since their exploits in the 1st Afghan War, there was still one veteran in their ranks—Subadar Major Mata-din Dube—who had gone through the siege of Kelat-i-Ghilzie, and to celebrate the occasion of the Battalion's return to Kelat-i-Ghilzie and in recognition of his forty years of loyal service, this Indian Officer was presented with the 1st Class of the Order of British India, on a parade held within the fort.

After the presentation, which was a surprise and delight to the old gentleman, he showed the General round the fort and narrated his reminiscences of the siege.

General Stewart had hoped to continue his march to Ghazni, but he was not very sorry to receive an order from the Indian Government that he was to return with his Division to Kandahar. So great, however, had been the deterioration of his transport, that sufficient camels were not available to move his whole force. So, after spending eleven days at Kelat-i-Ghilzie, he marched for Kandahar, leaving at the fort



DECORATING SUBADAR-MAJOR MATADIN DUBE, 12TH KELAT-I-GHILZIE REGIMENT, WITH THE
ORDER OF BRITISH INDIA WITHIN THE FORT OF KELAT-I-GHILZIE.

From a sketch by Lt. Pulley in *The Illustrated London News* of 1879.

a wing of the 19th Bengal Lancers, the wing of the 12th (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment and a company of Sappers until the end of February. This detachment then handed the fort over to a Ghilzie Chief, who had undertaken to hold it for the British Government against the Amir, and started on their return march to Kandahar, during which they suffered much from thirst and heat by day, and from cold by night.

About the time the Battalion was leaving Kelat-i-Ghilzie, news was received that Sher Ali had died in Northern Afghanistan, where he had gone with the futile hope of obtaining Russian aid. He was succeeded as Amir by his son Yakub Khan, who for some time had been endeavouring to arrange terms with the British. The Treaty of Peace was signed at Gandamak on the 21st May, 1879, under which the Khyber, the Kurram and Pishin came under British control, the Amir agreed to conduct his foreign relations on the advice of the Indian Government and to allow a British Envoy to reside at Kabul.

So it appeared that the objects of the campaign had been easily accomplished and, as in the case of the 1st Afghan War, all seemed *couleur de rose* in Afghanistan.

It was not feasible to withdraw at once all the British troops across the new border, but as a preliminary measure General Stewart had sent back a large part of his force, in which he had included those units whose health had suffered most, amongst them being the 12th.

The Battalion left Kandahar on the 12th March and arrived at Agra on the 19th April, 1879, where the health of the men gradually improved.

By the beginning of September the whole of the Khyber and Kurram Field Forces were back in Indian territory, and the few remaining troops of General Stewart's Force were ready to start their retirement from Kandahar, when like a thunderbolt came the news that the British Envoy—Sir L. Cavagnari—the four British Officers with him and nearly all of his

small escort from the Guides had been massacred at Kabul. The perpetrators of this deed were some Afghan regiments, who had got out of hand through grievances about their arrears of pay and thought that the British Envoy was in some strange way responsible for the adjustment of their claims.

So the war was on again.

The troops just about to leave Kandahar were ordered to stand fast and those on the march to India to retrace their steps. Roberts quickly advanced from the Kurram with a small force and after some fighting occupied Kabul, where the new Amir abdicated.

Afghanistan, now without any central government, was in a turmoil. The tribes rose under their local leaders and soon things looked almost as dangerous as in the second phase of the 1st Afghan War.

Some confused and by no means always successful fighting took place around Kabul, where for a time Roberts was beleaguered in the Sherpur cantonment, until a Division from the Khyber opened up that line of communication and slightly improved matters.

It had been decided that Stewart should march from Kandahar to Kabul with his Bengal troops, as soon as these could be replaced at Kandahar by troops from the Bombay Presidency.

A small force of the Bombay Army, under General Primrose, was hurried up to Kandahar and other units in various cantonments were placed under orders to be ready to move up in support. One of the units thus detailed was the 28th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry, stationed at Surat.

<p>Lt.-Col. Nimmo (Comdg.). „ Newport. Major Singleton. Lieut. Reilly. „ Chase. „ Fox (attached). Sur.-Maj. Keith. 15 Native Officers, 714 Rank and File, plus Followers.</p>	<p>The Battalion, with a Company of the 20th Bombay N.I. attached, left Surat on the 22nd January, 1880. Travelling by rail to Bombay, thence by sea to Karachi and then by the newly constructed railway across the desert, it</p>
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arrived at Sibi, the rail-head near the entrance to the Bolan Pass, on the 31st January.

This was the first occasion on which the men were dressed in khaki coats, but still with dark blue trousers. The British Officers were entirely in khaki, and for the first time had donned the "Sam Browne" belt. Khaki knickerbockers for the men were not received until September.

On detraining at Sibi the Regiment marched three miles to camp, where it arrived at 7 a.m. in a most severe dust storm. The bullocks being unable to bring up the carts, tents could not be pitched, so the men were dismissed and told to seek what protection they could from the dust and bitter wind. The storm continued till midnight, two followers dying from its effects.

The Regiment was employed for some days in improving a road across deep sand and providing garrisons for some posts in the Bolan, and then marched up the Pass in five detachments, the whole Battalion being concentrated at Quetta by the 2nd March. By the 15th, Battalion Headquarters and one Wing were garrisoning Chaman, with companies holding other posts on the communications.

The first shots fired by men of the 28th in this campaign were in a very small affair. Jemadar Ittoo Gowda and seven men of the Battalion were on escort duty with a Survey Party under Lieut. Fuller, R.E., when their camp, not far from Quetta, was attacked at daybreak of the 25th March by about 300 Kakar Pathans. The party was forced to retreat, three followers were killed, an R.E. sergeant and two men of the 28th were wounded and everything in the camp, except the arms and ammunition, was lost.

On the 28th April, Major Singleton, with 100 men of the Regiment, 2 guns of No. 2 Mountain Battery and 40 sowars of the Poona Horse, made a night march of thirty miles from Chaman to the village of Abu Sayid to enforce the submission of its "Mallick."

This task was accomplished without a shot being fired.

Meanwhile, on the 27th March, Sir Donald Stewart had marched from Kandahar, fought the critical but victorious action at Ahmed Khel, and arrived at Kabul on the 2nd May.

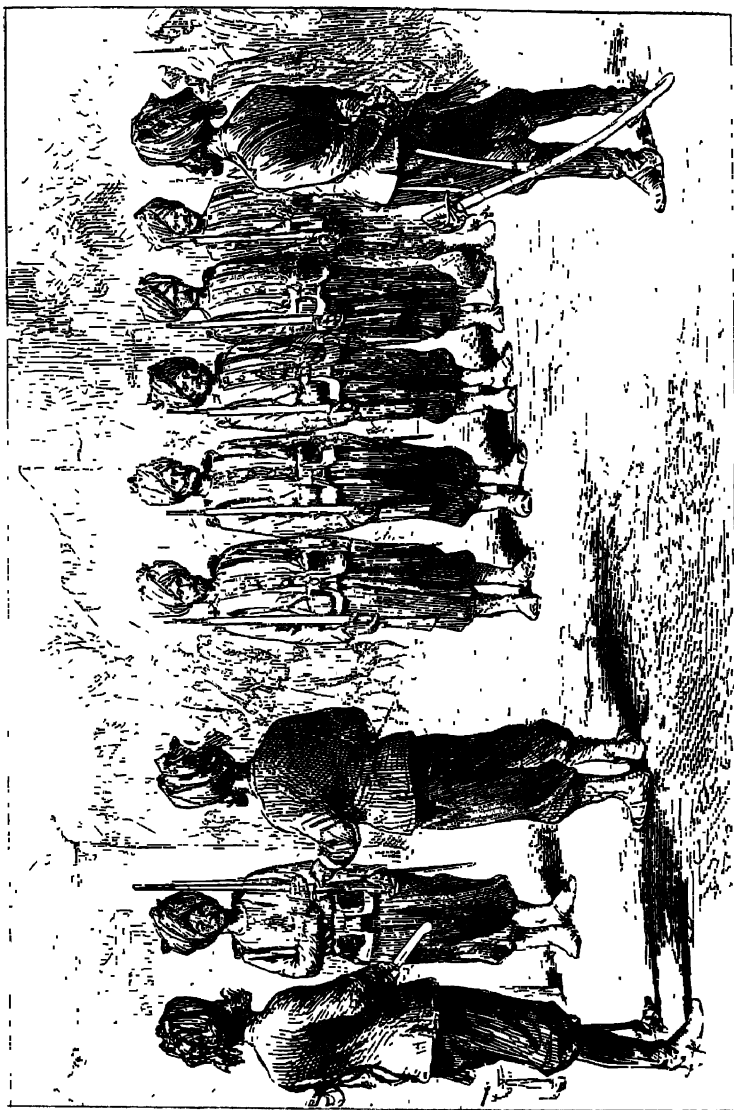
The Indian Government decided to offer the throne to Abdur Rahman, an exile who had entered the North of Afghanistan and collected a considerable following, but to cut off the Kandahar province under another ruler, Sher Ali. A powerful rival, Ayub Khan, had been collecting an army around Herat, and in mid June his advanced guard was reported to have crossed the Hari Rud. All the country around Kandahar was also in a disturbed state.

From his small force at Kandahar, already weakened by detachments sent to Kelat-i-Ghilzie and other posts, Primrose now detached a mixed Brigade under Brig.-General Borrow to prevent Ayub Khan crossing the Helmund.

Borrow's force was utterly routed by Ayub Khan at the battle of Maiwand on the 27th July, 1880.

The 28th Bombay Infantry had been ordered up as a reinforcement to the garrison of Kandahar, and marching in three detachments, as their posts were relieved, arrived at Kandahar on the 25th, 26th and 28th July. The country being up in arms, the baggage train of the last detachment, which included the Headquarters of the Battalion, was attacked whilst on the march, but Subadar Pandoo Redkur, commanding the rear guard, beat off the enemy, killing several of them and taking seven prisoners. This detachment reached Kandahar just as the remnants of Borrow's Brigade, in groups of "moaning and agonized humanity," were arriving at the City gates.

At 4.30 a.m. on the morning of this day, 100 men of the detachments of the 28th already at Kandahar were ordered out under Major Singleton, together with 70 men of the 7th Royal Fusiliers, 40 sabres of the Poona Horse and 2 guns, the whole commanded



DRILLING THE KELAT-I-GHILZIES IN THE LINES AT MOOLTAN.

From a sketch by Lt. Pulley, 3rd Gurkhas, in the *Illustrated London News* of January, 1879.

by Brig.-General Brooke, to cover the retreat of the survivors from Maiwand.

As this small force advanced they soon came upon some of the survivors dragging themselves along "dazed, foot-sore, dying of thirst, with a look of bewildered agony in their swollen faces and bloodshot eyes," whilst many corpses were seen of men who had been butchered by the villagers within a few miles of safety.

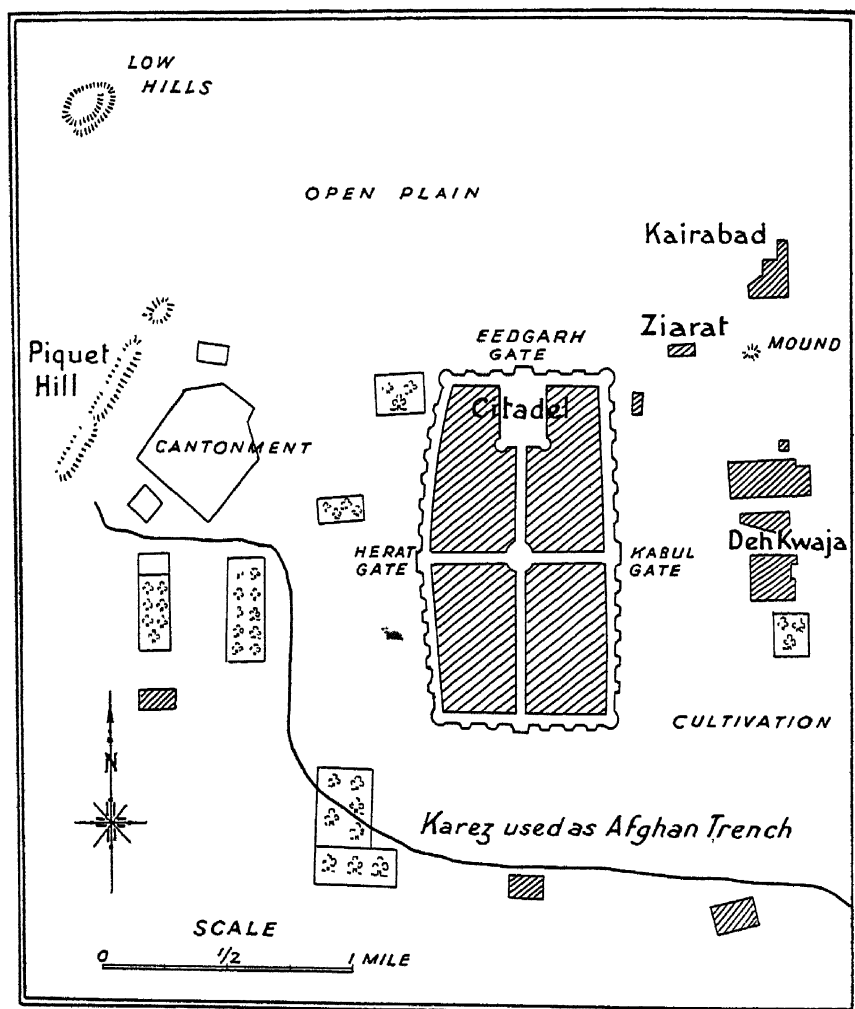
On approaching Kokaran—five miles from Kandahar—a large body of Afghans were seen to retire from the village, so the relieving force, after collecting as many fugitives as they could and loading "dhoolies" with the worst cases, started back to Kandahar, the march of necessity being very slow. The 100 men of the 28th formed the rear guard on the return march until near-by Kandahar, when they were ordered to clear a village from which snipers were firing on the column. This they did with the bayonet, under cover of fire from the 2 guns. They were back in the cantonment outside the city by 3 p.m.

Primrose now decided to put all his troops within the walls of Kandahar and to prepare for a siege. The cantonment was therefore evacuated at sunset that evening and, after some confusion caused by bad staff work, the whole force marched into the city. The 28th were allotted to the defences of the North Wall, with two companies told off to the N. and N.W. faces of the Citadel. Lt.-Colonel Nimmo was placed in command of the North Wall defences.

Ayub Khan spent some days after Maiwand in burying his dead and dividing the spoil, so for the first week of the siege the city was surrounded only by irregular tribesmen. During this time the garrison was employed in levelling buildings and other cover close to the city walls, this work being carried out under constant sniping, which caused casualties amongst the garrison amounting to 12 men killed, 1 British Officer and 40 men wounded.

On the 31st July it was considered necessary to

KANDAHAR 1880



clear the tribesmen out of Kairabad and a "Ziarat" lying to the N.E. of the City, and three companies of the 28th, with a detachment of the Poona Horse, were detailed for this duty. The attack was carried out successfully under Lt.-Colonel Newport and Lieut. Reilly, the men of the 28th driving the enemy out of the village into the open, where many men were cut down by the cavalry. The Afghan loss was estimated as fifty killed, whilst the 28th lost only one man killed and three wounded. After the troops had retired within the city, the enemy returned to Kairabad but did not venture to reoccupy the "Ziarat."

On the 5th August, Ayub Khan with his regular troops and further crowds of tribesmen arrived before Kandahar and formed their main camp behind Piquet Hill. Their guns opened fire from Piquet Hill and Deh Kwaja early on the morning of the 8th, and the very first shell, from a 12 pounder Armstrong gun on Piquet Hill, severely wounded a sepoy of the 28th, who was on sentry duty on the Citadel.

The Afghans by occupying villages and gardens, and by utilizing the banks of "karezes" and other natural features of the ground, day by day invested Kandahar more closely and it became evident that under cover of Deh Kwaja they were preparing for an assault on the city.

Primrose therefore decided to make a sortie on Deh Kwaja. Brig.-General Brooke was placed in command of the troops for this enterprise and he was given a free hand as to how it should be carried out. His command consisted of:—

100 men	...	...	3rd Bombay Cavalry.
100 "	...	...	Poona Horse.
100 "	...	...	3rd Sind Horse.
4 companies (300 men)			7th Royal Fusiliers.
4 "		"	19th Bombay Infantry.
4 "		"	28th " "

whilst the C.R.A. was ordered to act as directed by Brooke.

The plan was that the infantry should issue from the Kabul Gate and make a frontal attack in three columns on the village. One of these columns was commanded by Lt.-Colonel Nimmo and consisted of one company of the 7th Fusiliers and three companies of the 28th under Lt.-Col. Newport and Lieut. Reilly, whilst the fourth company of the 28th, with Lieut. Chase, was detailed to another column.

At dawn on the 16th August, the artillery on the Eastern face of Kandahar opened fire on Deh Kwaja, whilst the Cavalry issued from the Eedgarh Gate and made a wide detour to get to the Eastern side of the village, and the infantry formed up outside the Kabul Gate. The infantry advanced across 900 yards of cultivated ground with numerous low earth banks and entered the village at 5.30 a.m. They were met by a stubborn and brave resistance, for although the cavalry prevented reinforcements reaching Deh Kwaja, it also had the effect of making the Afghans feel that they were trapped in the village and thus fight the more desperately. The troops gradually forced their way through Deh Kwaja, until a lofty house at the N.E. corner of the village, facing Kairabad which was full of the enemy, was stormed and Havildar Bowanrao Morey and 15 men of the 28th were told off to defend it.

Having more or less cleared Deh Kwaja, the task of retirement had to be undertaken and Brooke sent a message that ammunition was urgently required. At this difficult moment General Primrose ordered "the retreat" to be sounded by buglers on the City walls and at about the same time Brooke was killed. Hearing the bugles, the cavalry completed their circling movement round Deh Kwaja and, after making a dashing charge through some Ghazis, retired to Kandahar, when at once crowds of Afghans began to reinforce the village.

The infantry had to fight their way out of the village as best they could, the fact that they knew that any wounded left behind would be killed making



COLONEL W. ST. L. CHASE, V.C., C.B.

rapid movement more difficult. Lt.-Colonel Nimmo having been twice severely wounded and Lt.-Colonel Newport killed, the only British Officers left of the detachment of the 28th were Lieuts. Reilly and Chase. Although some confusion naturally occurred, the men kept their heads, repelled several charges by Ghazis, and retiring by alternate groups which each in turn provided covering fire, they got back to the city with less loss than might have been expected.

The garrison of the lofty house, mentioned above, were so engrossed in repelling enemy advancing from Kairabad and firing on those in Deh Kwaja, that they put off retiring until too late and were left behind. Their action certainly gave great assistance to the rest of the troops in getting away, but these men of the 28th were eventually overpowered by numbers and, fighting stubbornly to the last, were killed to a man.

As the retiring troops were nearing the city, a dramatic incident was witnessed by all those on the city wall and others in the vicinity. This is best described in the words of an eye-witness—The Rev. A. G. Cane, Chaplain to the Forces—who wrote: "I had my attention directed to an officer, with a man on his back, and accompanied by another man, leaving one of the 'Ziarats.' He was then, I suppose, about 400 yards off, and running as fast as possible towards the walls. There was a fearfully heavy fire directed on him from the villages (Kairabad and Deh Kwaja) on both sides. After running for about a hundred yards, I saw both fall and lie flat on the ground, the bullets all the time striking the ground and raising the dust where they struck all round them. I, of course, was under the impression that they had been hit. Soon, however, I noticed Mr. Chase get up again, and again take the man on his back for another stage of the same distance, and again lie down for a rest. Again he got up and carried his burden for a third stage and again lay down. By this time he had got close to the walls. Only those who saw the terrific fire that was brought to bear on these two coming in,

can realize how marvellous was their escape untouched. At the time they came in they were almost the only object on which the enemy were directing their fire, as the rest of the fugitives had already reached shelter."

The wounded man thus rescued was Pte. Massey, Royal Fusiliers.

Over a year after this act, Lieut. W. St. L. Chase, 28th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry and the man who assisted him, Pte. Ashford, 7th Royal Fusiliers, were both awarded* the Victoria Cross.

Our casualties at Deh Kwaja were 106 killed and 118 wounded, of which the 28th lost Lt.-Colonel Newport and 31 men killed and Lt.-Colonel Nimmo and 21 men wounded. The Afghans suffered a heavy but unknown number of casualties, and the sortie had a marked effect. Many tribesmen returned to their homes, the enemy withdrew from Kairabad and Deh Kwaja, and the conduct of the siege notably slackened.

Energetic measures had meanwhile been taken for the relief of Kandahar. General Phayre at Quetta started to organize a force, but owing to the fewness of his troops, lack of transport, and the disturbed state of the country, it was plain that much time would elapse before he could advance. It was therefore decided that a force of just under 10,000, under Roberts, should march from Kabul to Kandahar. Roberts started on the 8th August, and shortly afterwards Stewart handed over Kabul to the new Amir, Abdur Rahman, and the evacuation of Northern Afghanistan commenced. Hence Roberts during his march had no base nor organized line of communications, and his force had to be self-contained, his transport consisting entirely of ponies, mules and donkeys.

His march met with no opposition and he arrived at Kandahar on the 31st August. Piquet Hill was occupied unopposed, as the Afghan army, much reduced in numbers by wholesale desertions, had

* London Gazette, 7th Oct., 1881.

drawn off to some hills three miles to the N.W. of Kandahar.

The next morning Roberts moved out to attack the Afghan position and after a dashing and skilfully conducted fight defeated the enemy, capturing all their guns, their camp, and most of their stores.

In this Battle of Kandahar, 4 companies of the 28th were detailed as escort to the Horse Artillery with Gough's cavalry brigade, and the remainder of the Battalion was in the reserve under General Primrose. They had practically no fighting and no casualties. After the battle, the 28th, with the 4th Bombay Rifles, took over charge of Ayub Khan's captured camp and stores, returning to Kandahar on the 8th September.

The Battalion left Kandahar on the 18th October, for employment on the line of communication between Quetta and Chaman.

Kandahar remained occupied by the British through the winter of 1880-81, during which there was much political controversy as to whether it should be retained permanently or not. It was finally evacuated and handed over to the Amir on the 4th May, 1881. On this same date the 28th Bombay Infantry left Kila Abdulla *en route* for Karachi, where it embarked for Karwar and marched thence to its peace station at Dharwar.

For services in this campaign, in addition to Chase's V.C., Nimmo and Singleton received brevet promotion.

During this 2nd Afghan War, the 7th Bombay Infantry were stationed at Bhuj and sent one company to be attached to the 10th Bombay Infantry in Afghanistan. This company took part in the minor operations against the Marris around the Chapper Rift and served with a mobile column under General Phayre, which was accompanied by Sir R. Sandeman. The company went to Kandahar as a personal escort to General Phayre, soon after the relief of that city; and after being employed in collecting supplies

around Kandahar, it rejoined its Battalion at Bhuj on the 9th February, 1881.

In September, 1883, an unusual task was given to a company of the Marine Battalion, in being sent into the Tanna and Kallian districts to wage war against a plague of locusts.

In December of the same year, a wing of the 12th (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment, under Lt.-Colonel Madden, then stationed at Silchar in Assam, formed part of a small expedition against the primitive Aka tribe, inhabiting mountainous country on the eastern side of Bhutan.

The cause of the trouble with these people appears to have been a ridiculous misunderstanding. The Akas thought the Government had insulted them by demanding the sale of a Raja and Rani to place in a museum, so they had detained an agent who had been sent into their country only really to obtain articles for an Exhibition in Calcutta. The Akas also had kidnapped two men from within British territory.

After the expedition had proceeded some distance into the hills, intimation was received that the prisoners would be handed over, so the force halted. The prisoners were not, however, forthcoming and a determined night attack was made on the camp. After this the force again advanced to the Tenga river, which was held in strength by the tribesmen. The passage having been forced, the Akas submitted and sent in the detained men.

The wing of the 12th had some tough marching and was present at the skirmishes. Sepoy Atar Singh was recommended for the Order of Merit for his gallantry in being the first to enter a stockade, after crossing the Tenga river, and though twice wounded, having remained in front of the advance; Lance-Naik Rurdu was also given this Order for rescuing an officer of the Frontier Police from drowning in the river. The wing returned to Silchar at the end of January, 1884.

Active service soon again fell to the lot of the



THE CITADEL, KANDAHAR, 1880.

28th Bombay Infantry, as on the 10th February, 1885, whilst stationed at Poona, they were detailed to form part of the Indian Contingent under orders to proceed to Suakin, on the Red Sea coast of the Sudan.

This country had recently been evacuated, after Lord Wolseley's failure to reach Khartum in time to prevent the death of General Gordon and its capture by the Mahdi. A garrison, however, had been left at Suakin and the British Government decided to destroy the power of Osman Dinga, a follower of the Mahdi in the Eastern Sudan, and then to construct a railway from Suakin to Berber on the Nile.

Sir G. Graham was appointed to carry out this task. The British troops assembling at Suakin were a Cavalry brigade, guns, a Guards brigade, a brigade of infantry of the line, 600 Australians, and a Balloon Detachment.

The Indian Contingent, commanded by Brig.-General Hudson, consisted of :—

9th Bengal Cavalry,
15th Sikhs,
17th Bengal Infantry,
28th Bombay Infantry,
1 Company Madras Sappers,

and sailed from Bombay at the end of February, 1885.

The 28th embarked in three small steamers, and landed at Suakin on the 12th March, when one company at once went on outpost duty. Every night the camp was harassed by snipers, who caused considerable annoyance.

Lt.-Col. F. C. Singleton.
Major R. Westmacott.
Capt. R. E. D. Reilly.
Lieut. R. L. B. Carter, Adjt.
" A. G. Aitken.
" A. T. F. Edwards.
" H. L. Custance.
" D. B. Thomson.*
Doctor F. Burness.
Subadar-Major Rama Kurilker.
16 Indian Officers and
811 Rank and File.†

On the 19th March, the British cavalry brigade, accompanied by the infantry of the Indian Contingent, made a reconnaissance to the village

* Major D. B. Thomson died on the 1st Nov., 1930, after hearing the news that his brother, Lord Thomson, the Air Minister, had perished in the wreck of the Airship R101.

† Included 50 men attached from the 7th Bombay Infantry.

of Hashin, which is on some rocky hills rising abruptly from the scrub covered desert about seven miles from Suakin. The cavalry had some skirmishes with the enemy and had a few casualties, after which the force returned to camp.

The next day nearly the whole force, including the Guards' brigade and the Indian Contingent, advanced again to Hashin. The formation for the march was one large square, of which the Indian infantry formed the left face, and as the country was very rough and covered with scrub, in places the prickly bushes being from six to eight feet in height, the going was difficult. After an engagement with about 3,000 "Fuzzy-wuzzies," mostly at long ranges, our infantry firing the steady volleys which were the fashion at that time, the East Surrey Regiment was left to hold Hashin, and the remainder of the force retired to Suakin, having suffered 48 casualties.

It was now determined to establish an intermediate post in the desert between Hashin and Suakin, and for this purpose the following force was despatched on the 22nd March, under command of Sir J. McNeill :

British.

1 squadron 5th Lancers.
Berkshire Regiment.
Battalion Royal Marines.
Field Company, R.E. (with telegraph equipment).
Naval Detachment (with 4 Gardner guns).

Indian.

15th Sikhs.
17th Bengal Infantry.
28th Bombay Infantry.
1 Company Madras Sappers and Miners.

The force marched off at 7 a.m. in two squares, the British square in advance, with Gardner guns, water carts and ammunition, followed by the Indian square, inside which were jammed 1,500 transport camels and mules.

The unwieldy Indian square had difficulty in forcing its way through the scrub, and the British square had to halt occasionally and wait for it to catch up.

During the march no enemy were seen from the squares, but the ships off Suakin shelled some parties observed in the desert to the right of the line of advance.

At 10.30 a.m. General McNeill decided to halt at a small open space in the scrub, known as Tofrek, six miles from Suakin. The idea was to construct with the scrub bushes a large zeriba, capable of holding 2,000 camels, with two flanking zeribas each to hold one battalion. On completion of the work, the Marines, Berkshires and Gardner guns were to be left in the zeribas, and the rest of the force was to return to Suakin before dusk.

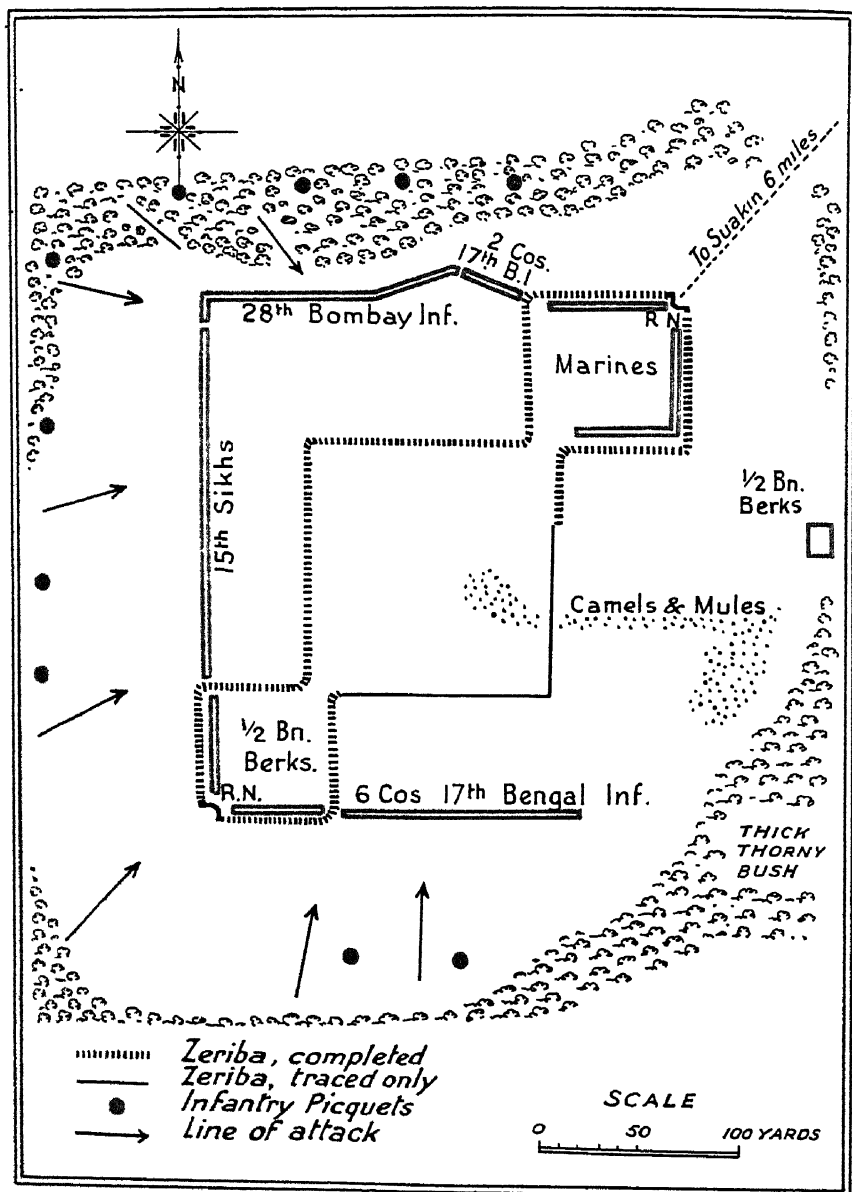
The precautions considered necessary having been taken, working parties from each unit were sent out to cut the bush, the loads were removed from the animals and the work of constructing the zeribas was commenced.

By 2.50 p.m. the 28th Bombay Infantry and the 15th Sikhs had nearly completed their part of the zeriba, and all except those still working were sitting down in line, with their rifles between their knees and bayonets fixed. The General had just ordered the unloaded baggage animals to be collected in rear, preparatory to the return march, and the animals were filing out of the central zeriba.

The Marines were inside their zeriba and half a battalion of the Berkshires in theirs, but the Gardner guns were not yet in position. The other half battalion of the Berkshires were having their dinner outside and to the East of the zeriba. The 28th Bombay Infantry and two companies of the 17th Bengal Infantry were in line facing North, the 15th Sikhs facing West and six companies of the 17th Bengal Infantry facing South, all these being outside the zeribas (as shewn in the Plan).

TOFREK OR MCNEILL'S ZERIBA

22ND MARCH, 1885



At this moment some of the 5th Lancers came galloping in and pushed through the left flank of the Sikhs and the right of the 17th, considerably upsetting the equilibrium of the latter; in came running also the infantry piquets and groups of the working parties in their shirt sleeves, and immediately behind them, in some cases amongst them, came rushing a mass of Arabs, who charged with the utmost boldness and determination.

The attack was a complete surprise.

A devastating fire was at once opened by all the troops, who seemed at once to grasp the situation, except by the six companies of the 17th Bengal Infantry, who for a moment seemed paralyzed, remained at the slope, and watched their Commanding Officer being killed by an Arab, who jumped up behind him on his horse and plunged a spear through his body. The next instant the 17th began to step back, breaking their formation, the walk broke into a run and the crowd, followed and mixed up with the charging, stabbing "Fuzzies," got jammed in behind the right of the 28th and the Marines' zeriba. The square was broken.

Then followed a most hectic twenty minutes. The Arabs were within the centre zeriba and so behind the 15th Sikhs and the 28th Bombay Infantry; about a hundred broke into the corner of the Berkshire's zeriba and killed a number of the Naval detachment who were getting the Gardner guns into position there; the animals were stampeded, and many of them, with some followers and other fugitives, made off towards Suakin. A small body of Madras Sappers behaved excellently, and their fire did much towards checking the rush of the enemy through the central zeriba and preventing them from attacking the 15th and 28th in rear. The half battalion of Berkshires out in the open formed square and accounted for many of the enemy, whilst their other half battalion soon killed all the enemy who had penetrated within their zeriba.

The 15th Sikhs and the 28th, with the two companies

of the 17th Bengal Infantry on their right, stood absolutely firm and their withering fire mowed down crowds of the charging enemy, some of whom got near enough to use their spears and to be bayoneted.

A staff officer present at the action recorded that "In front of the 28th Bombay Infantry the scrub was thicker than elsewhere, besides being only a few yards off, giving absolute cover to the Arabs. Any unsteadiness on the part of that regiment would have been fatal to us."

The 15th and the 28th each went into action 750 strong and each regiment fired 22,500 rounds from their Snider rifles, some of the men's hands being burnt by the rifles becoming so hot from firing.

The confused fight lasted only twenty minutes, by which time all the enemy who had entered the square had been killed and the rest had drawn off, leaving the ground covered with their casualties, 1,500 dead bodies being counted.

Our total casualties were 472, of which the 28th lost Lieutenants Edwards and Thomson severely wounded (the former died at dawn the next morning), 4 men killed and twelve wounded.

Parties of the enemy pursuing the fugitives had meanwhile been dispersed by two squadrons of cavalry, who were on the tract between the zeriba and Suakin. So ended this fight, called 'Tofrek*' in the battle-honours, but at the time commonly known as McNeill's Zeriba.

It was now too late for any troops to return to Suakin, so they lay out for the night, with the piteous cries of the wounded all around them. There was one false alarm during the night, on which some of the 17th again broke back into the square.

At midday on the 23rd the Guards' Brigade arrived and the 28th Bombay Infantry, with others,

* The 128th celebrated this day in after years by holding their annual sports on "Tofrek Day."

A comparison with Seedasser (page 42) and Beni-boo-ali (page 75) will show how little the tactics of this kind of fighting had changed in over a century.



TOFREK.
From the painting by C. E. Fripp in the Officers' Mess of the Royal Berkshire Regiment.

returned to Suakin. On each of the following three days, and then again after one day's rest, the 28th with other troops escorted water convoys to McNeill's Zeriba. On a few occasions shots were exchanged with the enemy, who once made a rush at the corner of our marching square, which was immediately repulsed.

The whole force marched out on the 2nd April to McNeill's Zeriba, where the 28th and 2 Gardner guns manned by Marines were left as garrison. The rest of the force moved on to Tamai, where some skirmishing occurred, the enemy retiring rapidly out of reach. The force then returned to Suakin, the 28th remaining in occupation of the zeriba till the 9th April, during which period they were often sniped at night, but had only one man hit. Work on the railway now commenced, and there was very little further fighting. Fifteen men of the 28th formed part of No. 5 (Indian) Company of the newly-raised Camel Corps, the other four companies being recruited from the British units.

Sir Norman Stewart, in his reminiscences* of this campaign, writes :

"The 28th Bombay Infantry, looking ahead, and thinking the regiment might be employed in these particular parts for a period of three years, which, I believe, was the estimated time for the Suakin-Berber Railway, very wisely determined to make themselves as comfortable as possible, so brought over with them the whole of their mess property, including mess tents, shamianahs, etc., as used in India during peace, as well as a complete active service equipment. The consequence was their mess was the centre of attraction, where any morning you might see officers from all the British regiments enjoying a quiet read of the papers in comfort, and it soon became known as 'the Guards' Club.' Later, when we were turned into an army of occupation, this foresight on the part of the officers of the regiment was well rewarded, as they were able to cater for a large number of honorary members, who otherwise would have had to live in discomfort on the food cooked by the one body servant allowed by Regulations, and spend a miserable, lonely existence. Here again could be seen the handiwork of Westmacott, an organizer whom nothing defeated! It was a

* "My Service Days."

pleasure to dine at this mess, where everything was done well, and where you were sure of a hearty welcome from a particularly go-ahead body of officers, who were equally good in the field. For their services at Suakin the regiment was turned into 'Pioneers' in '88, gaining further laurels on the Punjab Frontier and in Tirah."

. . . . "There was no lack of amusement, the fishing in and just outside the harbour was excellent, and under the guidance of the cheeriest of the cheery, 'Dickie Westmacott,' of the 28th Bombay Infantry, hardly a week passed without a gymkhana, whilst polo was played regularly. Cricket on a coir matting pitch was also indulged in, and the mess of the 28th Bo. Infantry was an attraction for all, run on lines other regiments might well copy. Here again one could see the handiwork of Westmacott, who was as good a man in camp as he was soldier in the field; in the latter he was hard to beat, and proved this years later in the Tirah Campaign, when, as a General, he showed *how* rear guard actions ought to be fought, and *where* Generals *ought* to be when these actions were going on, the best loved soldier I have ever struck."

Orders were received from the Government early in May for the withdrawal of the troops from the Sudan, except for a small garrison to be left at Suakin, of which the 28th Bombay Infantry was to be part. As the temperature inside the huts sometimes rose to 125°, the regiment was not altogether sorry when, after eight months in the Sudan, they were relieved and sailed from Suakin on the 16th October, 1885. The Indian Contingent was given a great reception at Bombay. The troops marched through the beflagged streets, the 28th being enthusiastically cheered everywhere. The men were entertained to dinner and sports on the esplanade by the people of Bombay, after which the battalion proceeded to its new station at Baroda. Soon afterwards Lt.-Col. Singleton started for home on sick-leave and died at sea on the 15th January, 1886.

Whilst the Indian Contingent was in the Sudan, another small war had been brewing. The bad behaviour of the Burmese Government towards merchants, the anarchy within its borders which affected those parts of the country already taken over by the British, and King Thibaw's deliberate refusal to improve matters led to the 3rd Burmese War.

Troops were despatched up the river from Rangoon and, after the slightest of opposition, occupied Mandalay on the 28th November, 1885. Upper Burma, all that was still left of the Burmese Kingdom, was annexed and became part of British India. It was only after this had been accomplished that real difficulties started. The whole country was infested by bands of dacoits, reinforced from the disbanded Burmese army, who terrorised the country and could not be dealt with by troops depending only on river transport. The task of putting down these dacoits and pacifying Burma occupied three years—from 1885 till the end of 1888—and two of our battalions took a hand in this work.

The 7th Bombay Infantry were sent from Ahmednagar, via Madras, to Rangoon, where they disembarked on the 31st March, 1886, the regiment being at once split up into many detachments. In May, 1887, the Battalion Headquarters moved to Thayetmyo. A detachment was provided with small Burmese ponies and trained as Mounted Infantry.

Colonel C. S. Sturt.*
 Captain H. E. Penton.
 Lieut. C. F. S. Alban, Adj.
 „ J. C. Hollway.
 „ J. A. H. Crauford.
 „ A. P. A. Elphinstone.
 Surgeon H. V. Jervis.
 15 Indian Officers.
 772 Rank and File.

Besides incessant patrolling and pursuit of dacoit bands by all the detachments, men of the 7th had sixteen recorded engagements with the enemy, in which our total casualties were only 1 killed and 6 wounded, the dacoit fighting being mostly of the shoot and skedaddle variety. A considerable number of dacoits were killed or captured.

One of the most successful of these small affairs was the breaking up of a gang of 200 dacoits under a notorious ruffian, named Boh† Shwey, who had previously caused a lot of trouble. Thirty-one Mounted Infantry of the 7th Bombay Infantry, under

* British Officers who joined later in Burma were Lt.-Col. G. Cunningham, Lt.-Col. P. H. Greig, Lieuts. Raitt, P. A. St. L. Wood, and J. H. Henderson.

† Leaders of dacoit gangs were called "Boh."

Captain Alban, with 40 Mounted Infantry of the South Wales Borderers, the whole commanded by Major Harvey, of the S.W.B., made a march of 52 miles through the jungle in 14 consecutive hours and then rushed the dacoit camp on the 5th October, 1887. Boh Shwey and ten of his followers were killed and the rest of the gang were so completely scattered that they never assembled again. A silver "lota," from which Boh Shwey was reputed to have drunk the blood of his victims, became a trophy in the Officers' Mess of the 7th.

Subedar Sheikh Ismail received the Order of British India, Havildar Ghasita Singh the Order of Merit and Subedar Ram Chandar and Jemadar Jhanda Singh were also mentioned in Despatches for gallantry, in having with small parties of men attacked and dispersed bands of dacoits on various occasions. Colonel Sturt and Captain Alban were also mentioned in despatches.

The 7th Bombay Infantry left Burma on the 30th January, 1888, and proceeded to Mhow.

The experiences of the 12th (The Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment were very similar. They left Lucknow, under the command of Colonel H. A. Little,* for Calcutta and arrived at Mandalay on the 30th December, 1886. Battalion Headquarters were first at Katha and later moved to Bhamo, with numerous detachments at various posts and on mobile columns. Two companies under Captain Angelo were in the operations against the Sawbwa of Wuntho and 50 rifles under Captain Craster took part in the Siu expedition. Later Captain Craster and Lieut. Morton with 100 rifles proceeded to the Silay Hills, where they lost 5 men killed and 5 wounded in an engagement on the 3rd December, 1887. The 12th also had a mounted infantry detachment.

The story of this campaign is of marches by day and night, through dense jungle where the path could

* Strength of Battalion and names of Officers proceeding to Burma are not given in the Digest of Services of the 12th.

hardly be traced, along paths so thick in mud that the soles of men's boots were torn off as they marched, over sandy tracts devoid of water, over hills where there were no paths at all. Rarely was there the chance of an engagement; stockades were found empty, villages deserted, camps evacuated, and yet everywhere there was the possibility of a sudden ambush from any clump of trees or line of rocks, or at any turn of the road.

Colonel Little was mentioned in despatches and Captain A. F. Barrow received the C.M.G.

The 12th (The Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment of Bengal Infantry left Burma on the 19th December, 1888, and proceeded to Benares.

Meanwhile on the 1st March, 1888, an important event had occurred. The 28th Bombay Infantry, whilst building "katcha" lines for themselves at New Jhansi, later known as East Kirkee, had been ordered* to be converted into Pioneers.

During an inspection of the Marine Battalion at Bombay in October, 1889, by the Commander-in-Chief (Sir Frederick Roberts), it was revealed that the question was under consideration of converting that regiment into Marine Artillery, but the idea did not materialize.

On the 9th September, 1889, the 28th (Pioneer) Regiment of Bombay Infantry was ordered to hold itself in readiness for service with the Chin-Lushai expedition. This expedition was organized to punish certain tribes that had raided into British territory and to explore and open out some little known country between Burma and Chittagong. The expedition was composed of columns operating from Burma and from Chittagong, the former against the Chins and the latter against the Lushais. The work of the Burma column lies outside the scope of this history and it will suffice to say communication was eventually established with the Chittagong force.

* Their conversion to Pioneers is described more fully on page 24.

The 28th left Kirkee on the 28th November, embarked at Bombay and reached Chittagong on the 11th December. They then proceeded in native boats up the river to Demagiri, where the force under the command of Colonel Tregear was assembling, which consisted of five Indian battalions, with some Frontier Police and other details.

Colonel Westmacott.
 Captain Chase, V.C.
 " Even.
 Lieut. Thomson.
 " Foster.
 " Brownrigg.
 " Wodehouse.
 " Hancock.
 " Fraser.
 " Venour.
 Surgeon Burness.
 731 Indian Officers,
 and Rank and File.

The force then marched into the hills, established posts at Forts Tregear, Lungleh and other places, whilst the 28th Pioneers, with a company of Bengal Sappers and Miners, constructed the roads to open up the country. For the 28th this was an ideal country in which to start their career as Pioneers. Mountainous and rocky, thickly jungle clad, and having nothing but the most primitive and narrow jungle tracts, it required both ingenuity and hard work to cut roads through it. The regiment was employed continuously for three months on this work and cut some sixty miles of mule road.

A small column, of which Lieut. Brownrigg and 102 men of the 28th formed part, was sent Northward to punish a truculent tribe. This column moved partly with coolie transport and partly on 900 rafts down the Klong river, and burnt a number of villages. On the 23rd February, Lieut. Brownrigg went out in command of a mixed reconnoitring party, which included some Pioneers, and coming on a Lushai stockade, he was severely wounded. This detachment had plenty of hard work in cutting tracks, opening up the rapids on the river for rafts and assisting to build a permanent post.

At the beginning of April, 1890, most of the Chin-Lushai Force was withdrawn, leaving garrisons in the posts, and the 28th Bombay Pioneers arrived back at Kirkee on the 18th April.

Colonel R. Westmacott received the D.S.O., and shortly afterwards* he was awarded the C.B.

One of the remarks by the Commander-in-Chief of the Bombay Army on the annual inspection report on the 28th, soon after their return from Chin-Lushai, was to the effect that he considered the battalion to be "one of the corps *d'élite* of the Bombay Army."

The murder of four British officers and a revolution in the state of Manipur had led to a small expedition in 1891. The following year it was decided that the Public Works Department should build a road to Manipur and the services of the 28th Bombay Pioneers were asked for in connection with its construction, and the Commander-in-Chief approved of the regiment being so employed. Manipur is a state to the North of the Lushai hills, with Burma on its Eastern border : it is mountainous and in parts covered with dense forest. The Battalion proceeded from Kirkee to Bombay, thence by sea to Calcutta, where it arrived on the 21st September, 1892. It travelled by river steamers up the Brahmaputra to Niguting and then marched to Nichuguard, where the road was to commence. The 28th were employed for eighteen months on this road in Manipur, working under a contract which proved financially beneficial to the men and to the regimental funds; they also gained experience in engineering and Colonel Westmacott took every opportunity for keeping up their efficiency as infantry. The Civil Engineers in charge of the road were favourably impressed with the regiment's work and with the many advantages of disciplined labour. During the rains of 1893 Surgeon-Major Burness, who had been the regimental doctor for many years, died at Manipur. The 28th arrived back at Kirkee in April, 1894.

Here are a few other incidents which occurred in the interval before the next campaign :—On the 6th January, 1893, Capt. Morton of the 12th

* D.S.O. in November, 1890, to date 28th July. C.B. in May, 1891.

(Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment, who was seconded for service in Burma, was killed in an action with dacoits.

The unusual event of a man being promoted to havildar for bravery on a shooting trip occurred in the case of Naik Bir Singh of the 7th Bombay Infantry. In May, 1894, he was out with Captain Alban, when that officer was mauled by a tiger, and Bir Singh, armed only with a twelve bore gun, came up and shot the beast, saving Captain Alban's life.

The lines of the 28th Pioneers at East Kirkee are built on nearly solid rock, covered with a thin layer of soil, and the battalion had made itself some quarries near the lines, for the construction of these lines and for training purposes. In March, 1896, Captain D. B. Thomson was severely injured by a premature explosion of a mine in these quarries. These quarries for many years gave an interest in life to the battalion medical officer, in addition to his normal chief employment of being mess secretary, as the pools which collected in them during the rains were a favourite breeding place for mosquitoes.

During 1895 the 12th (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment was stationed at Nowshera and had a great deal of hard work in connection with the Chitral Relief Force, as Nowshera was the base of the expedition sent to the succour of the garrison besieged in Chitral. The Regiment provided escorts for the treasure and other stores sent to the front and nearly every man qualified for the medal by crossing the frontier. Major Angelo commanded the Battalion, whilst Lt.-Colonel Barrow performed the duties of Base Commandant. Lt.-Colonel A. F. Barrow, C.M.G., received the D.S.O. for his services.

CHAPTER VIII

1897—1913

“TIRAH” “PUNJAB FRONTIER” “SOMALILAND, 1901-04”

IN 1897 occurred the violent and widespread rising of the North West Frontier tribes which led to the operations of the Mohmand, Tirah and other Field Forces.

Authorities differ considerably as to the true causes of this sudden outbreak, but religious fanaticism, for whatever reasons it was aroused and inflamed, was undoubtedly the immediate incentive.

In July the Malakand and Chakdara posts were assailed by vast numbers of tribesmen, and early in August the Mohmands attacked Shabkadr and burnt a British frontier village, whilst soon afterwards the Afridis attacked and captured all the posts in the Khyber Pass, including the important ones of Landi Kotal and Ali Masjid, which at that time were held by the irregular Khyber Rifles; only Jamrud Fort, the nearest of these posts to Peshawar, being saved from falling into their hands.

Never before had so many of the tribes been up in arms and combined against us. To deal with the situation it was decided that one force should assemble at Kohat to operate against the Afridis and other tribes in the Tirah, another force starting from Shabkadr should invade the Mohmand country, the Malakand Field Force should deal with the Swat tribes, whilst other smaller columns operated in the Kurram and Tochi valleys and in Buner.

Amongst the troops hurried up to the frontier were two of our battalions—the 12th (the Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment of Bengal Infantry and the 28th (Pioneer) Regiment of Bombay Infantry. As they formed parts of different columns, accounts of their services must be given separately.

THE 12TH (K.I.G.) BENGAL INFANTRY left Bareilly on the 20th August, 1897, to form part of a Reserve Brigade assembling at Rawal Pindi, but on arrival at that place they were ordered to proceed, without detraining, straight on to Kohat, where they were added to the strength of the troops at the disposal of Sir William Lockhart to undertake the invasion of the Tirah and to deal with the disturbances in the Kurram Valley.

On the 23rd September the Battalion set out for Sadda, which lies in the Kurram Valley between Thal and Parachinar, to join the Kurram Movable Column, commanded by Colonel W. Hill, whose job was to maintain order in the valley and to co-operate with the main force in Tirah. Various reconnaissances were made from Sadda into the enemy's country, in all of which a prominent part was taken by the regiment.

One of these reconnaissances was made up the Khurmana defile by a small force consisting of about a company from each unit of the Kurram Movable Column, the 12th supplying 100 rifles, because of a report that a hostile "lashkar" numbering from 3,000 to 4,000 tribesmen had assembled in that locality. This defile is seven miles in length, the hills on either side being very steep and covered with scrub jungle. Only slight opposition was met on the way out, but during the withdrawal the tribesmen attacked in force, but were beaten off with considerable loss. Unfortunately a piquet of the Kapurthala Infantry

* Later Brig.-General C. W. Somerset, C.B., C.M.G., M.V.O.

† Later Major-General W. C. Black, C.S.I., C.I.E.



FIVE INDIAN OFFICERS SERVING WITH THE 28TH (PIONEER) REGIMENT OF BOMBAY INFANTRY IN 1898,
ALL OF WHOM POSSESSED THE ORDER OF BRITISH INDIA.

L. to R. Sub. Haskalji Israel Bahadur, Jem. Seemurryan Bahadur, Sub.-Maj. Ram Singh Sirdar Bahadur,
Sub. Mohomed Khan Bahadur and Sub. Sheekh Mohomed Bahadur.

got left behind and their absence was not noticed until late at night after the column was back in camp, nor was it reported to Colonel Hill till the next morning. A force was sent out to search for them, but without result. Later it was discovered that the whole piquet of 36 men, whilst attempting to rejoin the rear-guard by a short cut, had been surrounded and killed in a deep and wooded ravine.

Whilst these events had been occurring in the Kurram Valley, the Tirah Field Force had stormed the Dargai heights, captured the Sampagha Pass and penetrated well into the Tirah.

On the 29th November a column under Colonel Hill consisting of :

Maxim guns of the Royal Scots Fusiliers.

200 sabres, 6th Bengal Cavalry,	} all but 50 of each unit being dis- mounted.
200 „ Central India Horse,	
400 rifles, 12th (K.I.G.) Bengal Infantry, under Major Twigg.	

200 „ 1/5th Gurkha Rifles.

200 „ Kapurthala Infantry,

marched from Sadda to co-operate with General Gaselee's Brigade (in which were the 28th Bombay Pioneers) from Bagh in the Tirah against the Khani Khel Chamkannis. The two forces joined hands at Lwari Mela on the 30th, so the 12th Bengal Infantry and the 28th Bombay Pioneers were together for a short spell, though little did they think that later on they would be so closely associated as the 2nd and 3rd battalions of the same regiment.

On the 1st December, Colonel Hill's force proceeded in two small columns to destroy the Chamkanni's principal village of Thabai, situated in a rugged valley running down from the Safed Koh range of mountains. The operation was successful, after some very difficult country had been traversed, and some loss was inflicted on the tribesmen. When the withdrawal commenced, the enemy followed it up as usual and

harassed the retirement most of the way back to camp. The total losses of Colonel Hill's force on this day were 1 British Officer and 5 men killed, 2 British Officers and 16 men wounded, of which the share of the 12th was 4 men killed and 3 wounded.

On the following day further operations were undertaken against the Chamkannis, during which they received heavy punishment, no less than thirty dead bodies being found amongst the "sangars" on one of the captured ridges and several fortified villages were destroyed. The hills covering the line of retreat were held through the afternoon by a company of the 12th until the rearguard had passed through, and on this occasion the withdrawal was effected without trouble.

The tribesmen having submitted, Colonel Hill's force marched back unopposed to Sadda. The 12th (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment remained in the Kurram Valley till the middle of January, 1898, when they returned to Kohat. They eventually arrived back at Bareilly on the 3rd June.

THE 28TH Bombay Pioneers received orders to proceed to Nowshera on relief scale and left Kirkee on the 12th August, 1897.

Lt.-Col. E. D. Rawdon Reilly.
Major W. St. L. Chase, V.C.
Captain L. M. Foster.
Lieut. F. M. Lane, Adjt.
" G. D. M. Moore.
" J. G. Greig.
" K. L. W. Mackenzie.
2nd Lt. K. Wigram.*
Lieut. J. H. Lloyd (attached).
Surg.-Capt. J. B. Jameson.
Subadar-Major Ram Singh, Bahadur,
and 10 Indian Officers,
575 Rank and File.

On arrival at Nowshera, the Battn. Headquarters and Left Wing detrained, but the Right Wing, under Major Chase, V.C., was sent straight on to Peshawar and from there at once marched for Jamrud Fort, where they arrived on the 19th August. At

Jamrud they formed part of the small force assembled under the command of Brig.-General R. Westmacott, because of the threatened attack on the Khyber posts by the Afridis, which as already narrated began on the

* After the Tirah he transferred to the 2/2 Gurkhas and is now General Sir K. Wigram, K.C.B., C.S.I., C.B.E., D.S.O.

23rd August and resulted in all the posts, except Jamrud, being captured by the enemy.

The 28th Pioneers were lucky to be under their former commandant, Richard Westmacott, during the greater part of this campaign. Not only did he prove to be an excellent leader in Frontier warfare, but he also thoroughly understood how to make the best use of Pioneers in their dual rôle of infantry and engineer troops in a country so suitable for their employment.

At 8 a.m. on the 23rd, General Westmacott heard that firing had been going on at Ali Masjid since early morning, so he moved out, as a demonstration, into the entrance of the Pass, where the battery opened fire on some of the enemy and caused their withdrawal. Lack of transport, however, precluded a further advance. Soon after the Khyber posts were occupied by the Afridis and, later on, a few of the Khyber Rifles came in to Jamrud. The 28th took part in several other demonstrations around the entrance of the Khyber Pass, which was held in strength by the Afridis.

On the 6th September, orders were received for the Regiment to form part of the Mohmand Field Force as Divisional Troops, but to be attached to the 1st (or Westmacott's) Brigade. The Battn. Headquarters and Left Wing entrained for Peshawar, joining the Right Wing with General Westmacott's column on its way through from Jamrud. Shabkadr was reached on the 13th September, where the whole of the Mohmand Field Force, under the command of Major-General Elles, halted till the 15th, when the advance into the Mohmand country began.

The first day's march was one of eighteen miles to Galanai, the track being so rough that the greater part of the transport could not get through till the

1st Brigade.

No. 3 Mountain Battery, R.A.
No. 5 Bombay Mountain Batty.
1st Bn. Somerset L.I.
20th Punjab Infantry.
2/1st Gurkha Rifles.
No. 5 Company Bengal S. & M.
28th Bombay Pioneers.

but to be attached to the
1st (or Westmacott's) Brigade.
The Battn. Headquarters and
Left Wing entrained for Peshawar,
joining the Right Wing
with General Westmacott's
column on its way through

following day. The force halted here, whilst the 28th Pioneers and the Sapper company were employed in making a road across the hills to Galanai, the work being very stiff and requiring a lot of blasting. However, after three days' work, where originally there had been but the vestige of a path, there appeared what an Indian newspaper reported to be "almost a bicycle track."

On the morning of the 19th, the Regiment marched with the Advanced Guard to the Nahaki Pass, the summit of which was reached without opposition. As the track over the Pass was impracticable for camels, the Regiment had two days' strenuous labour making a road, which, after the campaign was over, became a source of income to the local tribesmen, who charged a toll of Rs. 3 for each camel using it.

Information having been received that the enemy were holding the Bedmanai Pass in force, the Mohmand Field Force continued its march through most difficult country towards that place, whilst a Brigade from the Malakand Field Force also marched to co-operate, and on the 22nd September these forces were concentrated near the foot of the Pass.

Major Chase, V.C., took out a foraging party to collect wood from the houses in a deserted village, and from this village he could clearly see the standards of the enemy on the spurs of the Bedmanai Pass. "Lights out" had hardly sounded that night before bonfires appeared on the surrounding hills and sniping into the camp commenced. The guns fired a few star shells towards the hills and all was prepared in case the enemy should attempt a night attack, as they had recently done against a camp of the Malakand Field Force, but this did not materialize.

At 7.15 a.m. on the 23rd September, the combined force advanced to the attack on the Bedmanai Pass, the summit of which is about 1,000 ft. above the site of the camp, whilst the hills on either side tower above the Pass. Westmacott's Brigade was detailed to make a turning movement along the ridges against the

enemy's right flank, whilst the remainder of the force advanced directly on the Pass. The 20th Punjab Infantry and the 2/1st Gurkhas led the flank attack, the 28th Pioneers following in close support. The ascent was very steep and the manner in which the pack mules carrying ammunition, the heavier tools of the Pioneers, etc., kept their feet was wonderful. The men of the 28th were wearing full Pioneer equipment, but climbed at a brisk pace and kept up well with the attack. The enemy were driven back from ridge to ridge, with only trifling loss to the attackers, and by 11 a.m. the Pass had been gained and the tribesmen had drawn off.

At 2 p.m. the 28th were ordered to descend to Bedmanai village and to take it over from the brigade which had marched over the Pass, who then returned to camp. Whilst the Regiment was putting the village into a state of defence, they were fired on from other houses near by, but a few volleys cleared the enemy off. After spending the night in this village, the 28th were early at work next morning making a track over the Pass to enable the transport to cross, whilst most of the troops marched to the next camp. A wing of the 28th, under Chase, then escorted the transport through, but did not reach the new camp till 11 p.m., and when darkness came on the enemy commenced firing into the transport from close quarters, one N.C.O. of the 28th and several transport animals being hit.

Early on the 25th September the force started for Jarobi, the home of the Haddah Mullah, who had been chiefly responsible for stirring up the trouble amongst the Mohmands. The route lay through very desolate country, the force marching along the boulder strewn "nullas" used as roads by the tribesmen, until the mouth of the gorge leading to Jarobi was reached and the 1st Brigade was sent forward to seize it. A company of the 28th, under Wigram, was ordered to occupy a village on the right, which was taken after some opposition. Another company, under MacKenzie, with the Sapper and Miner company, were

detailed to burn and destroy Jarobi, which was accomplished under long range fire from the tribesmen on the heights around the village.

Later in the day the 28th Pioneers were ordered to take up two positions to cover the withdrawal of the advanced parties. As soon as the withdrawal commenced, the enemy began their traditional tactics of harassing the retiring troops in the hope of delaying the force so that it should become entangled in the ravines when darkness came on.

The 20th Punjab Infantry retired through the 2/1st Gurkhas, and the Gurkhas then retired through the two lines of the Pioneers, the Right Wing being in front under Chase and the Left Wing some 500 yards behind under Foster, the whole being under Lt.-Colonel Reilly. In a few minutes the 28th had nine men hit, but their steady fire checked the enemy and they successfully carried on the rear-guard action till the main body reached camp. That night the Regiment had two more men wounded by snipers firing into camp.

The next day the force moved down the valley in two columns, a wing of the 28th going with each, and forty-five towers, solidly built of stones, were blown up by the Regiment and the Sapper Company on this one day.

On the 27th, as the Khuda Khel people had refused to "come-in" to submit, a column from Westmacott's brigade, consisting of No. 5 Mountain Battery, the 2/1st Gurkhas and the Left Wing of the 28th Pioneers went out to destroy their towers, which lay in a horse-shoe shaped hollow at the foot of the hills. On the approach of the column, fire was opened on it from the towers and from the heights above. The Gurkhas advanced to clear the heights beyond the village, whilst two companies of the 28th, under Foster and Lane, were despatched to occupy the hills on the right, and another company, under Wigram, drove a party of tribesmen from a "sangar" on a hill to the left of the village. As soon as the enemy had been



WESTMACOTT'S BRIGADE DESTROYING JAROBI, THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE HADDA MULLAH.

From *The Illustrated London News* of 1897.

driven off and the hills occupied, two companies of the 28th blew up the towers and burnt the village. The withdrawal was successfully carried out in face of some opposition, companies of the 28th supplying the rear guard for part of the way back to the main force.

A halt was now made whilst the Mohmands accepted the Government's terms and surrendered the required number of rifles. A few villages which had refused to "come in" were then dealt with and their towers blown up, after which the Mohmand Field Force marched for Peshawar, where they arrived on the 6th October. General Elles, in complimenting the Regiment in his despatch, said that the speedy and successful termination of the expedition was in a great measure due to the excellent work done by the Pioneers and Sappers. Lt.-Colonel Reilly, Major Chase, V.C., Captain Foster and Surgeon-Captain Jameson received "mentions."

The 28th Bombay Pioneers had scarcely arrived at Peshawar when they were ordered to join the Tirah Field Force and accordingly on the 9th October they started on a three days' march to Kohat. On arrival they were allotted as Divisional Troops to the 1st Division, but to be attached to the 1st Brigade (Brig.-General R. C. Hart, V.C.). After a few days spent in obtaining warm clothing and transport, the Battalion marched via Hangu and joined the 1st Division at Shinwari on the 20th October, the day on which the 2nd Division stormed the Dargai heights. The Regiment was soon at work making a road over the "kotal" below Dargai to Karappa in the valley beyond, which they reached on the 26th.

On the 28th October the two Divisions of the Tirah Field Force, amounting to 17,600 fighting men, an almost equal number of followers and 24,000 pack animals, moved on and bivouacked at the foot of the Sampagha Pass, which was held by the Afridis.

Early next morning the attack on the Pass commenced, the 28th being with the reserve. The enemy

did not put up such a spirited resistance as at Dargai, and by 11 a.m. they had been driven off and the Pass had been secured, with only some thirty casualties on our side.

As the track over the Pass was extremely rough and only wide enough for one mule to pass along at a time, the 28th Pioneers were ordered to remain at the foot of the Pass with Hart's Brigade for that night and next morning to improve the path for the transport to cross into the Mastura Valley. This valley had never before been visited by any force nor by any individual European.

The force next advanced and captured the Arhangi Pass with little opposition, and then entered the Maidan Valley in the heart of the Afridi country. The 28th were kept hard at work on the road over the passes up to Maidan until the 17th November, during which period they had several casualties from snipers.

On the 18th the 1st Division under Major-General Symons marched to Bagh. Under the impression that the movement was only a reconnaissance and that their opportunity would come when the force began to retire, the tribesmen offered no serious opposition to the advance. But when they became aware that it was intended to form a camp at Bagh, they mustered in force and opened fire from every side, occupying towers and fortified houses, of which there were a large number in the locality, and some sharp fighting ensued. General Symons ordered the 28th Pioneers to take up a position on the right flank to protect the baggage during its march into camp, in carrying out which duty Subadar Mohomed Khan was wounded and a sepoy killed. The camp and piquets were heavily sniped that night. The next morning the Pioneers destroyed many towers and houses around the camp and afterwards there was comparatively little sniping at night.

To punish the recalcitrant Kuki Khel and to explore the route to the Bara valley, a column under General

Flanking Troops.

1st Bn. Yorkshire Regt.
1/2nd Gurkha Rifles.

Advanced Guard.

1/3rd Gurkha Rifles.
28th Bombay Pioneers.
2 companies Sappers and Miners.

Main Body.

No. 5 Mountain Battery R.A.
King's Own Scottish Borderers.

Rear Guard.

36th Sikhs.

Westmacott, nicknamed "The Tiger" by his Brigade, started from Bagh on the 22nd November on a three days' reconnaissance to Dwa Toi. The route lay along a river bed through the dangerous Shaloba defile, about six miles in length. The two flanking battalions moved off before

dawn to crown the heights on either side of the defile, where they remained throughout the three days.

The main body marched at 9 a.m. The first two miles along the bed of the stream were fairly easy going, but then, as the defile became narrower, the troops had to wade up to their waists in the water and some mules were carried off their feet by the rapid stream. One narrow gorge, where the river was only five yards broad, with perpendicular banks of at least 100 feet in height, above which rose steep slopes covered with holly scrub, was enfiladed from a high peak by a party of the enemy, who appeared to have the exact range and inflicted some loss on the Scottish Borderers.

The 1/3rd Gurkhas having been used up in clearing the slopes and ridges above this gorge, the 28th Pioneers were pushed forward as the vanguard. On nearing Dwa Toi the defile widened out and the enemy opened fire from hills in front and from both sides. To get at the enemy the Pioneers had to cross an open space, barely 500 yards across, commanded by hills on three sides, on which the tribesmen had "sangared" themselves. While the Pioneers were advancing to the attack across this open space, they came under heavy fire, but owing to the timely arrival of No. 5 Mountain Battery, who opened an accurate fire on the "sangars," the Battalion's casualties were only 1 killed and 5 wounded. The Pioneers stormed

the hills and drove the enemy from the "sangars," who then rapidly retreated, leaving a number of their dead scattered about on the hills.

The column camped at Dwa Toi in the Bara valley at about 4 p.m., but very little of the baggage got through that night, the bulk of it being parked on the approach of darkness, surrounded by strong piquets from the rear guard.

That night the 28th furnished two of the piquets on the hills overlooking the camp. The cold was intense, and as the men had no blankets, due to the baggage not having arrived, and as their clothes were wet up to the waist, a very uncomfortable night was spent. Early next morning the Pioneers and Sappers returned to the gorge to assist in bringing in the transport and to improve the path for the return march.

On the 24th the column returned to Bagh. The Pioneers moved out with the advanced guard and spent the whole day in the defile, helping along the transport by removing boulders and improving the route as far as possible. This was one of the many occasions when the Pioneers found that carrying tools on their backs was very useful. They came into Bagh with the rear guard.

The enemy at first attacked the rear guard very boldly, but the 36th Sikhs inflicted such heavy punishment on them that most of the march was unmolested.

On rejoining the main force at Bagh, the Regiment was transferred from the 1st to the 2nd Division, and was again attached to General Westmacott's brigade. The following order was published by the G.O.C. 1st Division: "Major-General Symons, on losing the 28th Bombay Pioneers from the Division, wishes to record his appreciation of the services of this fine regiment. All ranks have done well, worked hard, and not made a mistake since they started on the campaign."

On the 26th November the Battalion marched



COMMENCING WORK.



SAME PLACE A FEW DAYS LATER.

107TH PIONEERS ROAD-MAKING OVER THE SHEIKH PASS, SOMALILAND.

with General Gaselee's force to co-operate with the Kurram Movable Column in the operations against the Chamkannis, which have already been narrated under the account of the work of the 12th (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment in this campaign. The 28th had much road making to do and on the 6th December went out with the small column which met the troops returning from the Chamkanni country.

As the high hills were already covered with snow, it was decided to move the Tirah Field Force to lower ground for the winter. Orders were issued for the 2nd Division to march down the Bara valley and the 1st Division down the Mastura valley to Sawaikot, where these two rivers meet, shortly before flowing out of the hills into the Peshawar Vale.

The 28th Pioneers moved with the advanced guard of Westmacott's brigade from Bagh to Dwa Toi, again having to wade along the stream most of the way, but on this occasion no opposition was met. From Dwa Toi a small column, under Westmacott, consisting of 200 men from each of several battalions, including the 28th, went out to punish the tribesmen in the Rajgul valley.

On the approach of the leading company of the Pioneers, which formed the advanced guard, the enemy were seen streaming from their villages and some sharp skirmishing took place between the Pioneers, under Foster, and some of the tribesmen who were covering the retreat of their cattle. The towers were blown up and the force returned to Dwa Toi, the withdrawal being so skilfully carried out by Westmacott that the force had only four casualties, which included 1 man of the Pioneers killed and 1 wounded.

The march of the 2nd Division down the Bara Valley commenced next day, Westmacott's brigade leading, followed by Kempster's brigade, and there was some sniping from the hills during the whole march. On reaching camp two companies of the 28th Pioneers, under Mackenzie, were sent to occupy

a wooded hill above the camp, which was held by a party of tribesmen. After driving the enemy off, these two companies piqueted the hills during the night and joined the rear guard on the next day's march. Kempster's brigade in rear had a rough time during this day, suffering numerous casualties amongst the transport animals, and some of the drivers becoming panic stricken.

On the 12th December the march was resumed, but with Westmacott's brigade in rear. The rear guard was attacked by greater numbers, and with more recklessness than on any previous occasion, but the enemy were driven off with heavy loss. When, on the approach of darkness, General Westmacott decided to halt his rear guard on a ridge running across the line of march—as he saw it was unwise to attempt to join the leading brigade in camp—the enemy made a most determined charge. They were, however, again driven off. The brigade had over seventy casualties.

During this day's march the Pioneers were employed as escort to the transport, providing flank guards and making a number of ramps out of the river bed. The country was very rough and covered with scrub, but the transport was got through to Kempster's camp, about two miles farther on from where Westmacott had halted. The Pioneers had three men wounded.

The following day the 2nd Division reached its destination at Sawaikot, where it met a column sent out from Peshawar.

As the 1st Division and the Peshawar Column had seen less fighting than the 2nd Division, it was decided that the latter should remain to guard the lower part of the Bara valley, whilst the two former forces dealt with the tribesmen in the Bazar and Khyber valleys.

The 28th Pioneers were allotted to hold the Gandao Pass, on which duty they remained for two months. Their work was to piquet the Pass daily from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. so as to protect convoys passing through, by

preventing the tribesmen from occupying the many heights or creeping up the "nullas" to cut up the convoys. They also worked on making and repairing the road. During the time the Regiment was in charge of the Pass no convoy was disturbed in any way, but a few incidents occurred. A Hospital Assistant attached to the Regiment was killed on the road between Bara Fort and Gandao Post on the 10th January, 1898, whilst returning from Peshawar, and three mules were carried off. On the 16th January, whilst a piquet was withdrawing it was attacked by some 30 to 40 of the enemy and lost 2 men killed and 1 wounded. On the same evening one of the Posts was attacked, but the enemy were driven off without any loss to the Regiment. On the 18th a company was going out to open up the road in the usual manner, and as a piquet was nearing the top of a hill they were ambushed by about 60 tribesmen, who had concealed themselves near the summit and who opened fire at a range of 20 yards. Every man of the piquet was hit, 3 being killed and 3 wounded. The enemy then rushed down and got away with the six rifles. Although Captain Foster, with the remainder of the company, immediately followed up the enemy, they only managed to get near enough to fire a few long range shots.

On the 12th February the Battalion marched some way up the Bara valley with a Brigade under General Ian Hamilton, as it had been decided that the road should be improved in case of further operations being necessary. The 28th worked on making this road until the 31st March, when, all the Afridi tribes having submitted, the campaign came to an end.

The 28th Bombay Pioneers marched to Peshawar and entrained for Kirkee, where they arrived on the 14th April, 1898.

Lt.-Colonel Reilly was given brevet promotion, Major Chase, V.C., and Lieut. Moore were mentioned in Sir William Lockhart's final despatch, and

Subadar-Major Ram Singh, Subadar Haskalji Isreal, Subadar Sheikh Mohomed and Jemadar Seunaryan received the Order of British India.

The great usefulness of Pioneers, as shown in this campaign, had a good deal to do with more Pioneer battalions being formed and, as already described in Chapter II, in 1900 the 7th Bombay Infantry were converted into Pioneers, in 1901 the 48th Bengal Infantry (Pioneers) were raised, and in 1903 the 12th (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Bengal Infantry and the 21st Bombay Infantry (The Marine Battalion) were also converted into Pioneers.

The 7th Bombay Pioneers were fortunate to be selected for active service so soon after their conversion into Pioneers, as part of a force sent to Somaliland for the subjugation of the Mad Mullah, a man by no means mad. This leader had learnt a good deal in contact with the outside world at Aden, and, as an interpreter in a warship in Red Sea waters, he had obtained knowledge of ways of importing arms and ammunition.

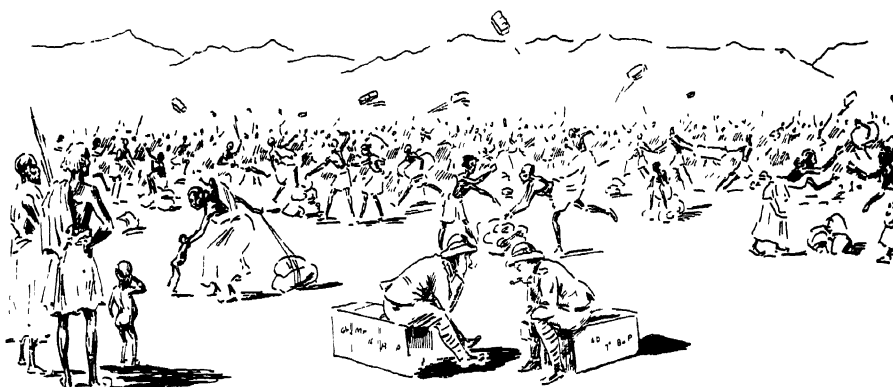
Previous to 1903, he had raided and harassed, with impunity, tribes nominally under British protection; he had gained much local prestige and a large amount of loot in cattle, ponies and camels, the last two giving his men increased mobility. His rations of camels' meat and milk were always to hand.

As his forays extended almost to the coast near Berbera, the authorities at last realized that something had to be done. The local levies were very few, and consequently had developed an inferiority complex. It was decided to send regular troops to Somaliland, and a force composed of 3 Indian regiments, 5 battalions of the King's African Rifles, 3 companies of Mounted Infantry (British, Boer and Indian) was despatched. These, with a few companies of Somali Mounted Infantry and some other details, were under the command of Brig.-General Manning.

The 7th Bombay Pioneers were detailed to the portion of the force operating from the North coast



SATISFACTION.



DESPAIR.

THE QUARTERMASTER'S NIGHTMARE,
or one kind of transport in Somaliland.

From sketches by Lieut. C. T. Davis, 7th Bombay Pioneers.

*Lt.-Colonel P. J. H. Aplin.
 Major J. A. Houson-Craufurd.
 " A. P. A. Elphinstone.
 Capt. E. N. Heale.
 " H. P. Keelan, Adjt.
 " J. G. Greig.
 Lieut. R. D. Marjoribanks.
 " W. P. M. D. McLaughlan.
 " J. Sterndale Bennett.
 " C. T. Davis.
 Capt. E. F. E. Baines, I.M.S.

Attached.

Major D. B. Thomson, 28th Prs.
 Lieut. A. Marjoribanks, 19th Bo. I.
 " H. A. Carter, 17th Bo. I.
 " H. W. Tobin, 28th Prs.
 " N. C. Bannatyne. "

Subadar-Major Rahim Khan.
 and 16 Indian Officers.
 705 Rank and File.
 84 Followers.

of Somaliland, and they left Kirkee on Christmas Day, 1902, arriving at Berbera on New Year's Day, 1903. The plan of campaign was for a force to land at Obbia (with Italy's permission) and move towards the Mullah, who was in Mudag, driving him into a wedge formed by our Abyssinian allies on the West and a British force in and around Bohotle, on the North.

No roads existed in Somaliland, only tracks across the wilderness leading from one group of wells to another. No supplies, other than sheep, could be obtained locally; all else had to be transported from the base at Berbera. The Southern force, which landed on the surf-swept coast at Obbia, soon had to roll up its line of communication behind it, and became dependent on being fed from Bohotle, by convoys crossing the waterless desert, called the Haud. Transport was by camel, though later carts and wagons were able to climb the Sheikh Pass into the hinterland. Water was very scarce, existing wells and water holes being long distances apart, and resort had to be had to digging to reach the precious liquid.

Thirty miles from Berbera the Golis Range rises sheer up, the top of the Sheikh Pass being 4,600 feet, then the country slopes gradually down towards the Indian ocean. On this sloping plateau are huge wildernesses of dense thorn scrub. One bush—the horrible "bilbil"—grows to 10 feet and has curved hooks of great strength, which, with the "wait-a-bit" and other objectionable vegetation, makes it difficult

* The list includes officers who joined during the course of the campaign.

and painful to pass along the narrow tracks formed by game or nomad Somalis. Amongst this scrub are scattered 15 to 20 feet high ant-hills, with the dead thorn laden branches sticking out of them. Marching silently through these on a moonlight night causes an eerie feeling, as if scores of witches are riding on broomsticks, made more eerie still by the strange sound of the wind blowing through the thorns.

In February, 1903, at the time the Southern force was advancing from Obbia, two double-companies of the 7th Bombay Pioneers were sent up to Bohotle, on the march clearing bad bits for a thoroughway. The other two double-companies constructed a good 20-foot wide road through the foothills of the Golis, and improved the camel track up the Pass.

At Bohotle a stone fort was started and over 100 wells were cleaned out. In this work two Jats of the Regiment lost their lives from poisonous gas, the second man dying in trying to save the first. A perimeter camp, large enough for all the troops and animals, was constructed, with a thorn abatis 15 yards wide, and a field of fire of 400 yards was cleared.

These companies were given the harassing duty of escorting the food convoys across the Haud to the Southern force. The escorts had to manage, on some occasions, with only half a gallon of water per man a day, which was agonising work in the hot months of March and April. The Pathan company lost three men in the bush for three days whilst on escort, but fortunately some friendly Somali Scouts found them, when almost *in extremis*. They had kept themselves alive by licking the dew off leaves and grass. On another occasion the Somali camel drivers deserted, but, nothing daunted, the fifty men took over camel driving and escort duty combined, and delivered the convoy complete by a hitherto unexplored route. These men, being Jats of Bikanir, understood the camel.

The Mullah drew first blood in this campaign, when at Gamburru on the 10th April, 1903, he almost

completely destroyed a reconnoitring column of 9 British Officers and 200 men under Colonel Plunkett, which had been detached from a larger column, commanded by Colonel A. S. Cobbe, V.C., covering the Southern force. One company of the 7th Pioneers, under Sterndale Bennett, having arrived as escort to a convoy, was with Colonel Cobbe at this time. Six months later, when Gumburru was visited, an irregular square of human bones and expended cartridge cases traced where the two hundred had made their last stand.

In June, when a fall of rain had made movement easier, the Mullah with the whole of his following boldly crossed between the two British forces and reached unmolested the grazing grounds of the upper Nogal Valley.

This brought the first and indecisive phase of the campaign to a close.

The Government of India now took over the conduct of the operations from the Colonial Office and Major-General Sir Charles Egerton was appointed to the chief command.

Further reinforcements were sent out, including half a battalion of the 2nd Hampshires. General Egerton, in asking for another Pioneer battalion (which was not sent), wrote that: "At present there is only one Pioneer Regiment to construct the whole 200 miles of the Berbera-Bohotle road, including the heavy work on the Sheikh Pass. It should be noted that local labour is practically unprocurable."*

During the pause in active operations, all the detachments of the 107th Pioneers† were gradually concentrated at the Sheikh Pass. No road from Burao to Sheikh existed, and this was constructed by a double-company working from the former place and another from the latter, on a compass bearing through dense bush. There was no water by which to camp,

* It is interesting to compare this statement with reason (a) for the abolition of Pioneers, given on page 8.

† The change of name took place whilst in Somaliland.

so the men had to march some 7 miles to work and then 7 miles back after work. This bit of road had a remarkable appearance three months later, after the rains, as the ant-hills, which had been cut and blasted away, had been rebuilt and nature had laid a green carpet along the path.

The work on the Sheikh Pass gave all ranks an excellent opportunity of increasing their efficiency as Pioneers, which was never allowed to fall below this standard in after years. The construction of the seven mile length of road, which rose 2,000 feet from Lower Sheikh to the top of the Pass, required much effort and skill in the short time allotted, as a great part of it had to be blasted out of grey granite and the width of road, curves and gradients had to be suitable for negotiation by Cape wagons and their teams of oxen. Culverts and Irish bridges abounded. The work was finished before the date stipulated by General Egerton.

On completion of this work, the Regiment was split up into detachments holding the advanced posts, while operations were taking place in the upper Nogal Valley, which culminated in the battle of Jidballi on the 10th January, 1904.

At this battle the 2 Maxim detachments of the 107th, under A. Marjoribanks, represented the Regiment. R. D. Marjoribanks was present as Intelligence Officer and H. A. Carter in command of Somali Levies. The last named officer, at the end of the pursuit after Jidballi, produced from his pocket the ears of the Mullah's men he had accounted for. He was noted for having shot two lions, one after the other, with a service rifle. The second lion charged him. In the Great War, Carter gained the V.C. and was killed.

It was not all work and no play in Somaliland, as the country abounded in game and many good heads were obtained. The regimental Medical Officer, Captain Baines, having the most time on his hands, had the greatest success. With the exception of some



OFFICERS' MESS, 7TH BOMBAY PIONEERS, AT GEL OKAR, SOMALILAND.
From *The Illustrated London News* of 1903.

scurvy, there was very little illness amongst the men.

The Mullah, having been driven out of the upper Nogal Valley, moved with a dwindling following northwards to the country around Rat. Lt.-Colonel Aplin, with two companies of the 107th, formed part of a force under Brig.-General Fasken, sent in pursuit. After hard marching, they fetched up at Las Khorai on the coast. There being no enemy left, the campaign closed down.

The 107th Pioneers and the 101st Grenadiers remained behind as a garrison and the former held the advanced posts on the Southern frontier of the Protectorate. They left Somaliland on the 29th November, 1904, for India and returned to Kirkee.

The Regiment was complimented in despatches for their services,* Lt.-Colonel Aplin received the D.S.O. and Subadar-Major Rahim Khan a "Mention." Lieut. R. D. Marjoribanks, for his work as an Intelligence Officer, received a deferred Brevet-Majority, to take effect on reaching the rank of Captain.

One lesson learnt on this campaign all ranks remembered and acted on for years—the conservation of water on the march.

During the years 1901-04 small parties of men from the 28th Bombay Pioneers served with the Uganda Rifles and in British Central Africa, and Jemadar Karam Singh received promotion for his service in Ashanti.

Somaliland was the last experience of active service for any of our battalions prior to the Great War, unless a small show in 1908 can be counted as such. On the 5th April of that year, whilst stationed at Quetta, the 128th Pioneers received orders to proceed to Kelat in connection with the suppression of the Mengal revolt, which had been going on for several months in defiance of the Government of India's appointment of a new chief to replace a Khan of Kalat, removed for incompetence. Five hundred men

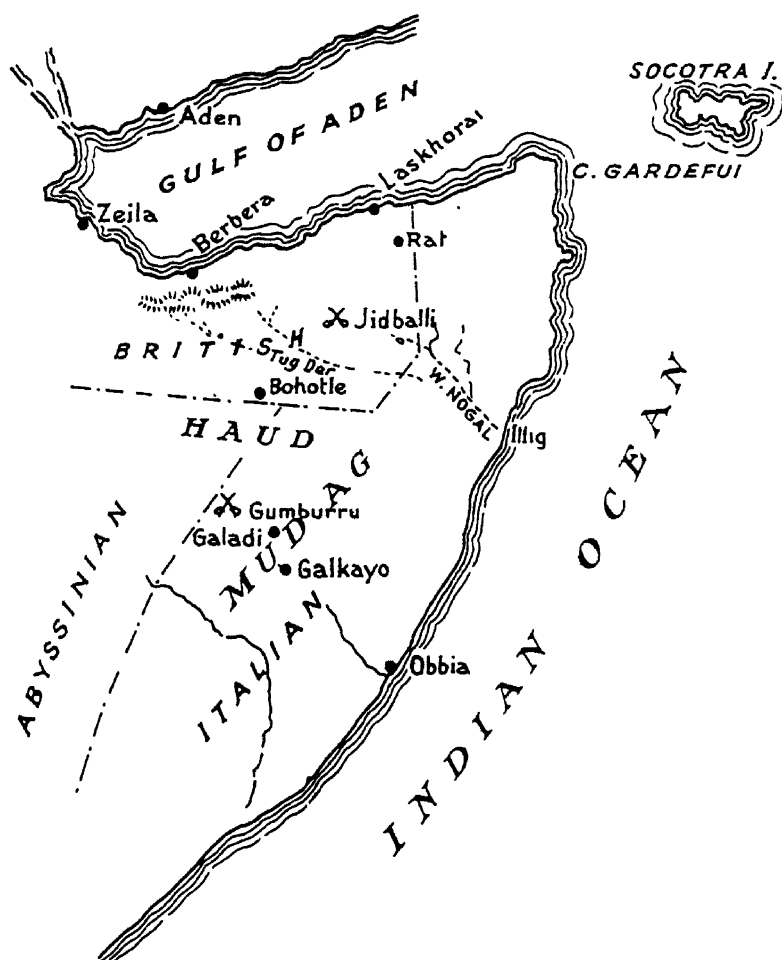
* The Battle Honour "Somaliland, 1901-04" was not granted till 1932. (G. of I. No. 663.)

of the Regiment, under Lt.-Colonel G. A. Brownrigg, entrained at three hours' notice for Mustang Road and marched thence to Kelat, a distance of 65 miles, arriving on the 8th September, having covered the first 43 miles in 24 hours. This move was in support of a force commanded by Lt.-Colonel C. W. Jacob (now Field-Marshal Sir Claud Jacob), composed of 300 of his regiment—the 106th Hazara Pioneers—2 guns of No. 5 Mountain Battery and a squadron of the 7th Hariana Lancers. The 2nd Column, composed of the 128th and 2 guns of No. 5 Mountain Battery, remained at Kelat, whilst Colonel Jacob's force marched further South to Wad. After six weeks of palavering, the rebel leaders submitted and the troops returned to Quetta.

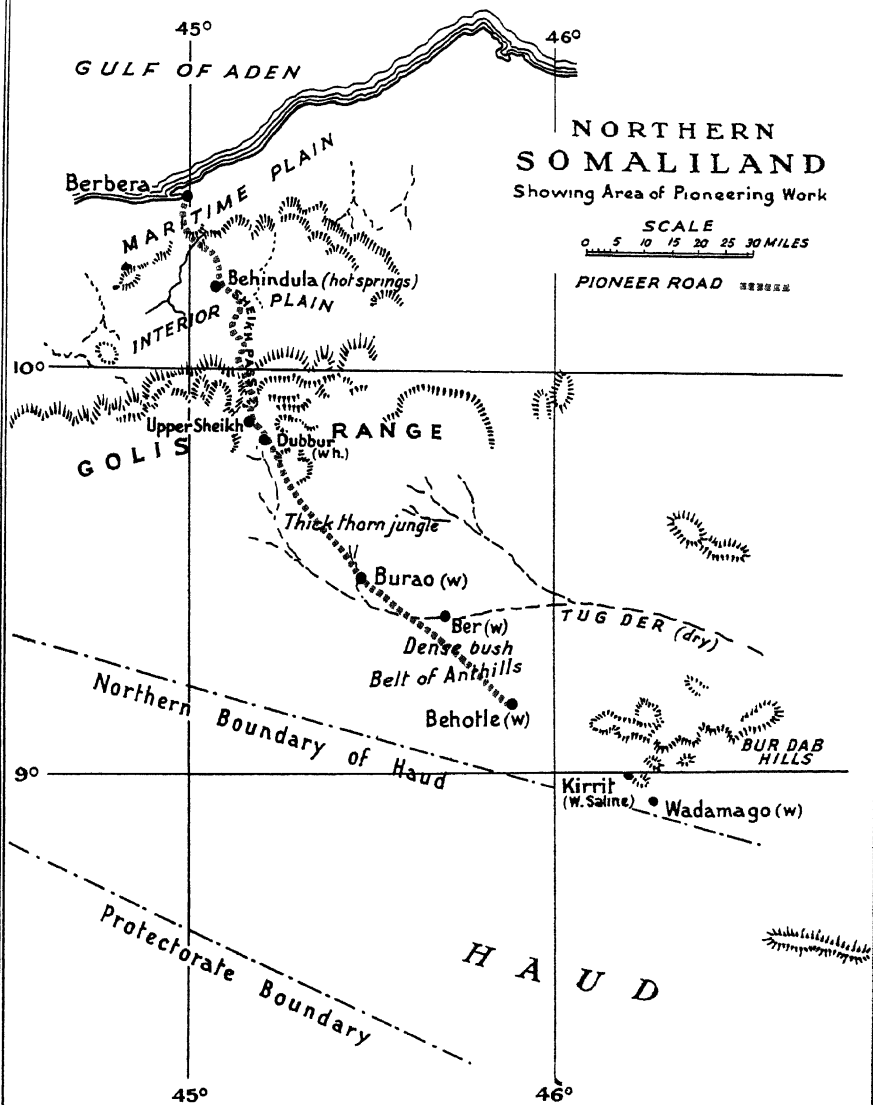
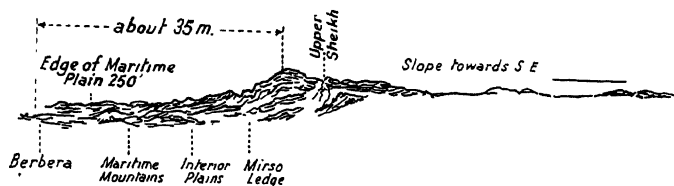
In August, 1910, the 48th Pioneers at Allahabad were ordered to mobilize and be ready to move into Thibet with the Gyantse Relief Force; but military operations were found to be unnecessary.

Regiments stationed at Quetta took it in turn to send a detachment to Robat, a desolate little place near the apex where Baluchistan, Persia and Afghanistan meet in the mountain called "Kuh-i-Malik Siah." The object of this detachment was to intercept caravans carrying arms from the Persian Gulf, across Persia and this corner of Baluchistan, through Afghanistan, to the tribesmen on the North West Frontier of India. In those days the railway from Quetta stopped at Nushki, whence there was a month's march across an almost uninhabited desert to Robat; some of the halting places had no water whatever, necessitating water being carried on camels. The first of these detachments, and therefore the one which had the roughest time, was furnished by the 128th Pioneers in 1906-07. It consisted of 2 British Officers and 200 men, of whom 25 died of scurvy. In 1908 the 121st Pioneers sent a similar detachment, and again in 1913 the same regiment sent a larger detachment of 5 British Officers, 5 Indian Officers and 350 men to Kacha, a few miles from Robat, where they

SKETCH OF HORN OF AFRICA



ROUGH ELEVATION SHOWING COUNTRY BEHIND BERBERA



built barracks from sun-dried mud bricks, made by themselves in the desert. When the Great War started a larger force* was sent into this region, and so grew what eventually came to be known as the East Persian Cordon.

For the Coronation Durbar of H.M. King George V at Delhi in 1911, the 48th Pioneers, 107th Pioneers and 128th Pioneers, together with two battalions of Sikh Pioneers, were employed in preparing the arena, grandstands, camps and roads; they also took part in the ceremonial and festivities. A number of pensioned Indian Officers were entertained at Delhi, some as guests of the Government and others as guests of their former regiments. Subadar-Major and Hon. Captain Ram Singh, Sirdar Bahadur, a pensioner of the 128th Pioneers, was selected to act as "Chobdar" (mace-bearer) to His Majesty at the Durbar and was awarded the medal of the Royal Victorian Order for his services. In recognition of the work done by the Pioneers, the three commanding officers—Lt.-Colonel C. W. Somerset, 48th, C. G. Carnegy, 107th, and A. H. D. Creagh, 128th—were given the M.V.O.

The main part of the ten years prior to 1914 was taken up with military training or employment on Civil Contracts. Work on these contracts gave Pioneers very useful experience in engineering, and Lord Kitchener, when Commander-in-Chief in India, was very keen on their obtaining such work whenever possible. The commanding officer entered into a contract with a civil firm, or with the Public Works Department, to do the work at certain rates, from which the regiment had to pay for transportation to and from the site of the work, and for all extra expenditure involved. Most of these contracts turned out to be remunerative, the officers and men receiving a fair share as working pay, and a useful sum going to the regimental funds to be used for the benefit of the men or of the regiment as a whole. There

* For General Dyer's operations see Appendix No. 9, and for the East Persian Cordon see pages 303 and 341.

were occasional deaths or injuries from explosions and other accidents, and the Government undertook to pay the pensions due to such incidents. For a period the taking up of contracts came to an end, because the Government wished regiments to take on the responsibility of such pensions, and commanding officers were unwilling to do so.

The civil contractors frequently expressed their satisfaction with the work of Pioneers and found that the employment of disciplined labour had great advantages. In both railway and road work the Pioneers invariably produced better results than civil labour. The work was enjoyed by officers and men, kept them very fit and made a change from continuous military training. The men were particularly keen when each company worked separately and received working pay by results, as this brought out the competitive spirit. On several occasions battalions came straight off contract work on to manœuvres and always acquitted themselves well. Experience proved that the smarter the men were at drill and military training, the better they were at engineering.

A list of the more important contracts undertaken up to 1914 is given in Appendix 7.

It was greatly owing to Lord Kitchener's organization and sound training that the Indian Army was in such fine fettle when the great trial came. He was keen on Pioneers and insisted that they should be both good infantry and well trained in practical field engineering. During the time he was in India, some of the manœuvres were based on the experiences of the Russo-Japanese War and included trench digging at night, the use of hand-grenades and trench mortars; but after he left India, training was again entirely for open warfare. A number of officers were unable to imagine that Indian troops would ever be used in European warfare; for instance, early in 1914, a senior regimental officer gave a lecture to the effect that training for war against the N.W. Frontier tribes was all that was necessary for the Indian Army;

within a few months, the lecturer was killed in France, whilst gallantly leading Indian troops.

War, of course, brought to light some defects in organization, such as insufficient provision for the reinforcements required to replace the unprecedented casualties, owing partly to many of the reservists being unsuitable and too old; each battalion having a separate *depôt*, with an inadequate staff allotted to it; and a new system of keeping pay accounts, which proved to be quite unsuitable for field service conditions; but these were trivial matters compared with the vital requirements for an army—loyalty and military efficiency—in which the Indian Army had never stood higher than in 1914.

* * * * *

When England declared war on Germany, our battalions were in the following stations :—

12th (K.I.G.) Pioneers (Lt.-Col. W. C. Black)	Quetta.
48th Pioneers (Lt.-Col. A. J. N. Haward)	Kirkee.
107th Pioneers (Lt.-Col. N. M. C. Stevens)	Meerut.
121st Pioneers (Lt.-Col. F. C. Laing)	Jhansi.
128th Pioneers (Lt.-Col. A. H. D. Creagh,	
M.V.O.)	Sitapur.

Instead of recording the services of the battalions chronologically as heretofore, in the following chapters the several theatres of war are dealt with in turn.

CHAPTER IX

1914—1915

“FESTUBERT, 1914-15 ” “GIVENCHY, 1914 ”
 “NEUVE CHAPELLE ” “AUBERS ” “LOOS ”
 “FRANCE AND FLANDERS, 1914-15 ”

AT Meerut at 10 a.m. on the 9th August, 1914, the 107th Pioneers received orders to mobilize as Divisional Troops of the 7th (Meerut) Division.

Lt. Col. N. M. C. Stevens.
 Major H. P. Keelan.
 „ J. M. Bruce.
 Capt. W. P. M. D. McLaughlin.
 „ C. T. Davis.
 * „ L. Griffith.
 † „ E. B. Mangin.
 „ C. A. Shute, Adjt.
 * „ J. E. G. Carlisle.
 Lieut. F. H. F. Hornor.
 † „ B. H. Wallis.
 † „ H. G. Burridge.
 † „ E. W. Geidt.
 Capt. R. F. Hibbert, I.M.S.

Subadar-Major Sharam Singh.
 and 15 Indian Officers.
 810 Rank and File.
 plus Public and Private Followers.

Composition.

‡No. 1 Coy. Sikhs (Lobana).
 2 „ Rajputana Mussalmans.
 3 „ Pathans (Yusufzai).
 4 „ Mahrattas.

A large number of men were absent on furlough, and some of these had to overcome considerable difficulties in rejoining, as the rivers, especially in the Deccan, were in flood during the monsoon. Some reservists were taken on the strength because the battalion was ordered to start 10 per cent. over war strength. On the 20th August the 107th entrained, but then received orders to stand fast, and they finally left Meerut on the 31st and

* Capt. Griffith was A.P.M. Meerut Divn., and Capt. Carlisle raised and commanded the Divisional Ammunition Column, but both later rejoined the Battalion.

† These four officers were on leave in England and joined the Bn. at Port Said off the H.T. “Dongola,” which had 750 officers on board returning from leave.

‡ Companies in the Indian Army were not called A, B, C and D till the publication of I.A.O. No. 684 of 1916.

embarked on the H.T. "Barala" (Capt. Hollyoak) at Bombay on the 2nd September.

The German cruiser "Emden" was at sea somewhere in the Indian Ocean, and fear of her caused the native stokers of the transport to desert. This might have delayed the start of the voyage had not a party of N.C.O.s and men of the 107th volunteered to act as stokers. Their services were accepted and they performed this work during the whole voyage. On arrival at Marseilles Capt. Hollyoak handed over their pay as stokers to the Adjutant and also offered to compensate them for damage to their clothing, but when the money was offered to the sepoys, the Adjutant noticed nothing but black looks. Their spokesman then explained that acceptance of pay would make them into mere stokers, whereas they had volunteered to work solely for the "izzat" of the regiment and to ensure that there would be no delay in getting to the front.

The Lahore Division had sailed from Karachi on the 24th August, the "Barala" with the 107th on board and four other transports, escorted by H.M.S. "Swiftsure," sailed from Bombay on the 3rd September, but the rest of the Meerut Division did not set out from Karachi until the 21st September. The destination of the voyage was unknown to the officers of the 107th, so was the subject of eager speculation, many thinking that they were for garrison duty in Egypt, but when Port Said was left behind it was apparent that they were to face the great adventure of assisting the sorely tried British and French armies in France in stemming the advance of the most powerful army in the world, an army which the Germans had brought to the highest state of perfection before making their bid for world power.

Off Alexandria the "Barala" joined up with the convoy of 22 ships carrying the Lahore Division and near Malta another convoy of 12 large ships sailing eastwards was passed, on board of which were the Territorials on their way to India.

Marseilles was reached on the 26th September, and the troops were disembarked at the docks. Here they handed in their arms and were re-issued with machine-guns, rifles and bayonets of the latest pattern; the mechanism of the new rifles was similar to that of the discarded ones, but the ammunition, with a more pointed bullet, was of a later pattern, the Mark VII.

The next morning the 107th Pioneers took part in the memorable march through the streets of Marseilles. The troops from India were greeted with unbounded enthusiasm and flowers were showered on them as they marched along the cobbled streets. In their anxiety to show appreciation of the troops come to defend "La Belle France," people rushed into the shops and bought cigarettes and wine, which they tried to thrust into the hands of Sikhs and Mussalmans, and their astonishment at the disgusted refusal of their gifts was intense. Those classes not debarred by religious scruples benefited by this generosity and were correspondingly popular. On several occasions, in their enthusiasm at seeing "Les Hindus," French girls would break into the ranks and the spectacle of bearded Sikhs marching impassively with eyes strictly to the front, with a girl, her arms round the necks of two warriors, swinging herself along, was astonishing to the officers who saw it and to the crowds, who were impressed by "such discipline."

The troops were much admired by the French, and they were indeed worth seeing—"beautiful regiments" of men in perfect condition, well equipped and well trained.

The units were distributed to various camps, the majority to the race-course, the 107th Pioneers marching eight miles to St. Marcel, where they pitched camp. The battalion stayed ten days at Marseilles. They had daily route-marches, did some work on several camp sites, and on one occasion paraded with the Lahore Division for a march past the French G.O.C. Region, when the onlookers were again most enthusiastic.

The sepoys were interested and much amused with their first impressions of Europe and the many entirely new sights; the huge cart-horses used in Marseilles particularly exciting their wonder. The town was full of French and British officers, and a few officers' wives having come over from England, the cafés presented a cheerful scene. The British officers had to adopt the French method of saluting on every possible occasion, and of every officer of a party returning a salute, instead of the British custom of only the senior doing so. The large number of women wearing deep mourning was a reminder of the realities of the war.

The regiment left Marseilles on the morning of the 5th October, and detrained at Orleans on the 7th. Throughout this journey great consideration was shown to the men by the French people, who provided food for them at each station at which the train stopped, whilst friendly crowds waved flags and cheered the passing train.

Twenty days were spent at Orleans. The 107th assisted to prepare camping sites for their own Division, the greater part of which disembarked at Marseilles on the 12th October; they also did a good deal of route marching, practised entrenching and managed to arrange for each man to fire five rounds from the new rifle.

A schoolmaster, 2nd Lieut. Newell,* and a Frenchman, Arnaud Coste, were posted to the regiment as interpreters. Coste had hurried home from his business in Shanghai with the intention of serving with the French cavalry. He remained with the 107th during the whole time they were in France, and became a popular member of the Mess. His only duties were assisting in billeting arrangements, smoothing out any difficulties with the inhabitants, and shopping for the Mess, his choice of wines rapidly converting the British Officers to quite a French taste in beverages.

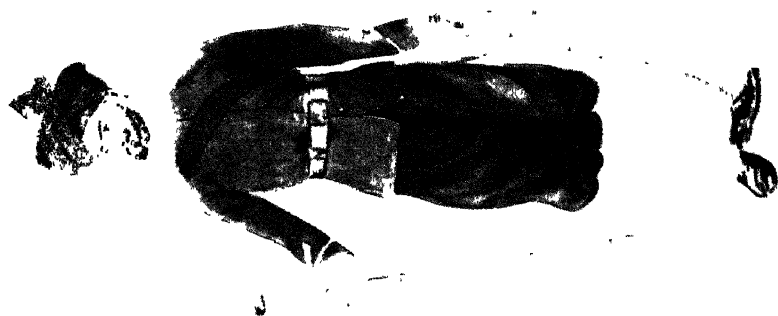
* Lieut. Newell was transferred to a Labour Corps in October, 1915.

The Lahore Division departed for the front on the 18th October, and some of its units were already in action by the time the Meerut Division followed on the 27th. The 107th Pioneers travelled by way of Abbeville, Boulogne and Calais, then S.E. via Hazebrouck to Thiennes, where they detrained and spent from midnight till dawn in unloading stores. The battalion marched from the railway station at 7.30 a.m. on the 29th October, some nine miles to Calonne, where they occupied their first billets in some scattered farms. Here for the first time in France they could hear heavy gun-fire to the South-East.

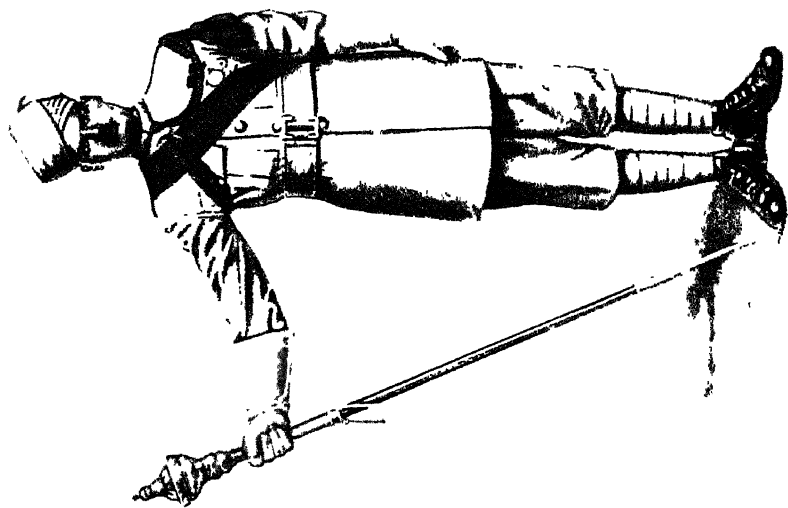
The general situation was briefly as follows:—After the check to the Germans on the Marne, each side had commenced a series of turning movements towards the coast, in an endeavour to outflank each other, which only resulted in prolonging the battle front until the North flank of both armies rested on the sea. The Germans had not yet begun to withdraw troops to oppose the Russian advance, so the mass of their armies being on the French front, they were much superior to the Allies in numbers and armament, and had many divisions with which to attempt to break through the thinly held line of the Allies. In their great but unsuccessful attack, lasting from early in October till nearly the end of November, 1914, the fighting extended from North of Ypres down to La Bassée. It was during this fighting that the Indian Corps arrived to reinforce the hard-pressed British Army, and was ordered to take over the line held by the 2nd Corps, from just North of Rouges Bancs down to Givenchy.

In such large scale events as this, the adventures of a single battalion seem to assume an insignificance comparable with those of a private soldier during former campaigns!

After a night's rest at Calonne, the left half battalion marched to Croix Barbée, where they were billeted in the village, which had been riddled by former shell fire, English and French batteries being in action on



7th Regiment of Bombay Infantry.



DRUM MAJORS.

1st Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers.

either side of the village. At night Colonel Stevens and his Adjutant—Captain Shute—were ordered to confer with the C.O. of the Seaforths about making bomb-proof shelters in their trenches near Neuve Chapelle. It was very dark, and in reconnoitring the front line, which at that time was not continuous, these two officers and their orderlies found that they had wandered beyond it and were close to the German trenches. In coming back Colonel Stevens' orderly entered the Seaforths' trench at a different place from the others, and received a prod in the leg from the bayonet of a watchful Scot. This was the regiment's first casualty in France.

The right half battalion had proceeded to Festubert,* 1,200 yards behind the small length of trench which had just been captured by the Germans from the 2/8th Gurkha Rifles, who had been driven out of the trenches with terribly heavy casualties after an overpowering bombardment of shell and bombs. The lost trenches were quickly recaptured at night by the 58th Rifles and some companies of the West Ridings and Bedfords; the half battalion of the 107th were in support but were not called on to take an active part in this counter-attack. All that night this half battalion was employed, under desultory shell fire, in digging a reserve trench, in case of an enemy break through.

At dawn the next morning (31st October) both half battalions marched to Gorre, where by 9 a.m. the 107th Pioneers were reunited and were temporarily attached to the Bareilly Brigade. The shortage of troops made it necessary to use the Pioneers as infantry, although there was endless engineering work which required doing.

It was cold with drizzling rain, when at dusk the 107th Pioneers were sent up by the road leading direct from Festubert to the trenches, to relieve the Devonshire Regiment. They were dressed in their thin Indian khaki and on this first occasion the

* *Vide* Map No. 8.

officers went up to the trenches wearing their swords. The position taken over was immediately South of the ruined farm, called Piquet House, on the Quinque Rue, the same length of trench from which the 2/8th Gurkhas had been driven, and which had been recaptured by a counter-attack. Many corpses had been buried in the parapet, from which in some places arms and legs protruded. The left end of the trench bent back at a right angle and then curved round behind Piquet House, thus exposing the trench to enfilade fire. This bend was named Hell Corner. Later on the battalion took over some of the trench on the North of the road as well, which they connected up by tunnelling under the road. The front trench was merely a wide and straight drainage ditch along the side of a road; the ditch had been deepened, but had no traverses, revetment or shelters—a travesty of a trench compared with those constructed later on. No covered way to the rear existed, except the shallow ditches alongside the road and bounding the fields. The whole country around Festubert being low lying and flat, with water ditches bounding every field, made it difficult to move about, and the mud was of a very sticky and smelly kind.

The first man of the 107th to be killed was one of their best wrestlers, a Havildar of the Mahratta company.

As soon as they had taken over from the Devons, the 107th worked the remainder of the night on constructing traverses and improving the trench, work for which their previous training in engineering and their equipment eminently fitted them. The Sikh company was on the right, the Mahrattas in the centre and the Pathans on the left, the Rajputana Mussalmans being in support.

Dawn was very welcome after the first night in the trenches, as it enabled the battalion to see the nature of the position it was holding. The German front line trench could be seen at a distance of about 200 yards from our right to about 120 yards from our

left, and the enemy had sapped in dead ground near enough to our left to enable them to throw hand-grenades from the sap heads. These hand-grenades were particularly aggravating because our men had not a single one of any description to throw back. An enemy trench mortar was also active. The traverses built during the night had much improved the trench, but the left portion let in some enfilade fire, and here the Pathan company lost 2 killed and 19 wounded. Just before dusk the enemy opened a brisk gun fire on our trench and an attack was expected, but our guns replied accurately on to their front trench, when things quietened down to occasional rifle shots during the night.

Further improvement to the trenches reduced the next day's casualties to 1 killed and 5 wounded. Three enemy saps had advanced still nearer to our trench and were now only 20 yards off. Turning a maxim on to these sap-heads seemed to have some effect, but the men frequently had to repair damage done to the parapet by bombs. On the fourth night in the trenches, the 107th were relieved by the Norfolk Regiment, and moved back into bivouac behind Festubert and then at daybreak to billets at Gorre.

That same evening the 107th were again ordered up to hold a portion of the front line, some way to the left of their former position, where they remained three days and then returned to Gorre. During this time in the trenches, half the battalion worked at night on making a support line about 80 yards behind the front line. Heavy rain made this period in the trenches most uncomfortable.

The battalion's casualties during this week had been 4 men killed, Subadar-Major Sharam Singh and 53 men wounded. Lt.-Colonel Stevens was also grazed by a bomb splinter, when he, with Captains Davis and Shute, were temporarily buried by the explosion of a trench mortar shell which came over and burst on the parados of a trench.

For the next six days the 107th were employed by day in preparing material for wire entanglements, and by night some parties put up the wire in "no man's land" along the front of the position, and other parties repaired damaged parapets and dug new support trenches. The 107th were also considered to be the reserve for this part of the line. Whilst on night work on the 10th November, the Adjutant, Captain Shute, was seriously wounded. His duties were taken over by Lieut. Wallis.

On the 12th November, 1 N.C.O. and 3 men went to Locon, as representatives of the regiment, for inspection by Field Marshal Earl Roberts, when he made his last public speech to the assembled troops two days before his death.

Our line had become so attenuated that even cavalry regiments were being used as infantry in the trenches.

On the 14th November, half the 107th were sent up to hold a section of the firing line, and the next day the remainder of the battalion relieved the 7th Dragoon Guards in another section of the front trenches; all four companies were thus strung out holding a long stretch of front line, with no company in support. On the 16th the Germans, from their sap-head in front of our left, broke down our parapet with bombs, killing Lieut. H. G. BurrIDGE and 3 men, and wounding 7 men of the Pathan company. At dusk some of the 6th Jats made a dashing raid on this sap, which they captured and held, whilst a party of the 107th and some Sappers filled in the German sap and repaired our demolished trench. It was cold, raining and very dark, and the mud was horrible.

The following day the headquarters and half the battalion returned to billets at Gorre, but the Sikh and Rajputana Mussalman companies remained in the trenches for a further six days. During this week the half battalion at Gorre worked every night at trench digging, and both they and the companies in

the trenches had a few casualties and there were a few cases of "trench feet."

Snow had now commenced to fall, with occasional frost at night, making the mud in this low lying ground

Joined on 18th November, 1914;—

Capt. W. H. La T. Darley, 12th
(Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Pioneers.

Capt. B. Turnbull, 23rd Sikh
Pioneers.

still more appalling.

In or out of the trenches,
the 107th never lacked
rations, nor any other
supplies which it was

possible to procure, as in Lieut. Hornor they possessed the ideal Quartermaster, who, no matter how bad the conditions, always contrived to get them up. The men were still wearing the thin "drill" khaki brought from India, but they had a good supply of warm underclothing and the short overcoat called "coat warm British." Early in December they were issued with a more suitable serge uniform of a greenish-khaki shade, with a "pugri" to match, and at the end of that month they received long overcoats.

The British Officers always wore "pugris" when on duty with their men in France, as this made them less conspicuous. The "pugri" also had the advantage of giving some protection against shell splinters and shrapnel bullets.

The relief of the Meerut Division in the trenches by the Lahore Division was fixed for the nights of the 22/23rd and 23/24th November, and the half battalion of the 107th in the trenches rejoined the other half battalion at Gorre on the night of the 22/23rd.

The trenches to the East of Festubert were held on this night by some units from both Divisions, as the relief was not yet completed, and in the morning of the 23rd November the enemy commenced to throw bombs from their sap-heads, which were only a few yards from our parapet, and they succeeded in expelling some of the 34th Sikh Pioneers and the 9th Bhopal Infantry from the front trench, which a counter-attack by the supports failed to recapture.

Meanwhile the 107th Pioneers at Gorre were

loading their kit with the happy prospect of proceeding to Vieille Chapelle for a week's rest, when, at 9 a.m., they were ordered to stand fast. The 107th were then moved to a large barn on the Rue de Bethune, where the men were served out with more ammunition. A Pioneer tool on the back, the regulation 70 rounds in pouches, and two extra web bandoliers, each holding 50 rounds, one slung over each shoulder, makes a heavy load to carry over deep mud. Thence the battalion marched to Festubert, which was under shell fire, and put some houses into a state of defence.

At 2.30 p.m. stretcher-bearers and a working party of 20 men were sent to dig out a First Aid Post of the 57th Rifles and 129th Baluchis, established in a house near the Festubert cross-roads, which had been completely buried by a direct hit on the house by a "Jack Johnson," three medical officers and several wounded men having been killed. Little could be done, but the party managed to rescue a few wounded men from the ruins.

By this time the enemy had captured about 800 yards of our front line, from where the Festubert road crosses the trenches to due East of Le Plantin, and the Corps Commander, Sir James Willcocks, had issued orders that the original line must be restored before dawn and held at all costs.

At 3.30 p.m. the 107th Pioneers received orders from Brig.-General Egerton, commanding the Ferozepore Brigade, to move up to some support trenches East of Le Plantin, and they accordingly marched from Festubert to Le Plantin, along an "unhealthy" road, around which rifle bullets were dropping, and established Battalion Headquarters in a cottage in the village.

After heavy artillery fire from our batteries, reinforced by some French guns, an attack was made at 4.30 p.m., when it was already dusk, by detachments of the 2/8th Gurkhas, 58th Rifles, 34th Sikh Pioneers,*

* Amongst the many casualties of the 34th Sikh Pioneers in this attack, Lieut. A. K. Macpherson, of the 12th (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Pioneers, who was

6th Jats and some other units; at the same time the 107th Pioneers moved forward from Le Plantin to occupy the support trench just vacated by the 6th Jats, on the way up losing their Adjutant, Lieut. Wallis, who was wounded, his place being taken by Capt. Mangin. In this support trench were found remnants of several units, who had already made gallant but unsuccessful counter-attacks.

This attack was partially successful, some portions of the front trench being recaptured, but a long stretch still remained in German hands.

The Sikh company of the 107th, under Major Keelan, now managed to get forward and took over a portion of the front trench recently recaptured, to the South of the stretch still held by the enemy, and only a few yards from them. The 107th had no hand-grenades.

At 6 p.m. Lt.-Colonel Stevens received orders that the 107th Pioneers and two companies of the 2nd Leicesters were to attack the position still held by the enemy, whilst the 1st Bn. 39th Garhwal Rifles attacked from the North. The 107th now moved into a communication trench leading to that part of the front trench held by their Sikh company, but in this communication trench, between them and the front line, was a company of the Leicesters. They were thus at right angles to the position to be attacked.

They were now told to wait and support by fire a party of Sappers and Miners, who with primitive grenades recently manufactured by themselves, were to attempt to bomb their way along the enemy trench. This gallant attempt of the Sappers made no progress.

Some parties were sent out by the 107th during the night to reconnoitre the enemy's position, and, amongst others, Captain Turnbull was wounded.

It was now decided to attack at 4 a.m. on the 24th, at which time it was still quite dark. The ground

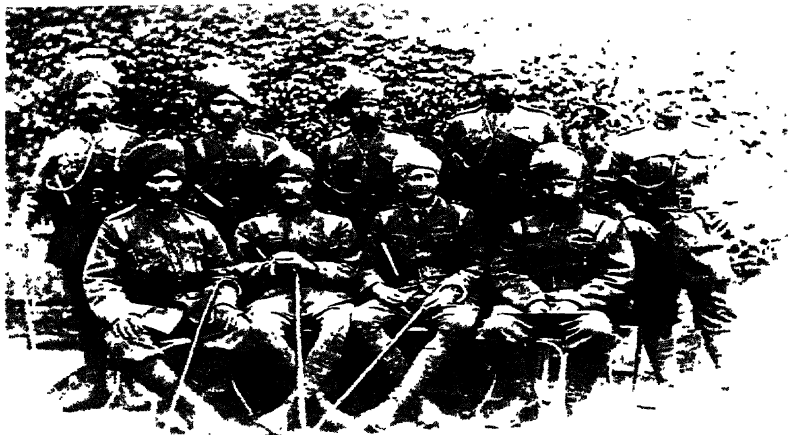
attached to that regiment, was severely wounded. He was invalided out of the Army, but later, having made a wonderful recovery, he was readmitted.

was covered with snow, the trenches were ice-bound, and a piercing wind was sweeping across the dreary flats around Festubert.

On the right of the leading line for the attack were a company of the Leicestershire, then the Mahratta company of the 107th, under Major Bruce, with the Pathan company, under Capt. McLaughlin, on the left; the machine gun section and the Rajputana Mussalman company, under Capt. Darley, were in support. On going over the top of the communication trench, the attacking line had to wheel and then advance on the enemy, the Leicestershire, being on the right, having the shortest distance to go. Our men showed up against the background of snow and were met with a hail of bombs and bullets, which checked the attack; but after much confused fighting, during which Major Bruce was killed and Capts. Davis and Mangin wounded, about a platoon of the Leicestershire and some 10 Mahrattas of the 107th reached and occupied part of the enemy's position. Capt. McLaughlin having been dangerously wounded, Subadar Khan Zaman took over command of the Pathan company in his place, and skilfully led them during the remainder of the fight.

Meanwhile the 39th Garhwalis had started their attack from the North, but instead of attacking across the open, they adopted the then novel method of bombing along the trench, a party of bayonet men rushing round each traverse as soon as the bombs had exploded, and by this means they accounted for the remaining Germans, and, just as dawn was breaking, joined up with the 107th Pioneers. Thus the whole of the lost* position, which had been so tenaciously held by the German 112th Regiment, was at last re-occupied.

*Although this was the most important battle in which the Indian Corps, by itself, had yet been engaged (in which it lost 53 officers and 866 men), its true significance compared with other events can be gauged by the fact that "The Official History of the War," by Br.-Gen. Sir J. E. Edmonds, devotes only four lines and a foot-note to it. (Vol. France and Belgium, 1915, page 4.)



OFFICERS NO. 3 COMPANY (MAHRATTAS AND PATHANS).
ESTAIRES, SEPTEMBER, 1915.



MAJORS H. P. KEELAN AND J. M. BRUCE, 1914.

107TH PIONEERS IN FRANCE

These are the only available photographs of the battalion in France.

The casualties of the 107th Pioneers were:—killed, Major J. M. Bruce and 17 men; missing, believed killed, 5 men; wounded, Capts. McLaughlin, Davis, Turnbull, Mangin, Lieut. Wallis, Subadar Hashmat Dad and 39 men.

The recaptured position was now held by a jumble of units, which, as it got light, were gradually sorted out. The trench was full of dead bodies and wounded men, whilst the ground around was littered with the dead and dying, fire from the German trenches making it difficult to aid any wounded in the open by daylight. During the day the 107th, under their three remaining British Officers, Lt.-Colonel Stevens, Major Keelan and Capt. Darley, did some repairs to the trenches, which had been damaged by bombardments from both sides, and a number of corpses were buried in the parapets and traverses, as was frequently done in those days, thus becoming part of the defences.

On that night (24th/25th November) the inter-Divisional relief was completed. The 107th were relieved by the 2/39th Garhwalis and marched to billets at Vieille Chapelle, where the men arrived in an exhausted condition. They were allowed to rest throughout the 25th and 26th.

Capt. Darley and 50 men of the 107th Pioneers were now sent to Gorre to work with the Sappers and Miners in their bomb factory. As our infantry were so handicapped by having no hand-grenades and as none were obtainable at this time from the Ordnance, the Sappers and Miners of the Indian Corps had commenced to manufacture some primitive ones, the first supply of which had been used successfully during the counter-attack on the night of the 23rd November. These bombs, which this party of the 107th now helped to make, were of a similar type to those made by the Sappers in India in 1907, when, for a short period, the trench fighting of the Russo-Japanese War was being studied. They were made from empty jam-pots filled with explosive and nails, being lighted by a fuse; another sort, called

hair-brush bombs, consisted of a half slab of gun-cotton tied to a piece of wood. The Sappers and Miners also made some rough trench mortars. Feeble as these weapons were compared with the German grenades and mortars, yet they were very useful until supplies of more efficient ones were received from England.

After three days' rest, instead of the week which they had expected, the battalion was at work again

* *Joined on 6th Dec., 1914 :*

Capt. L. Griffith, from A.P.M.

Meerut Divn.

Lieut. E. W. Geidt, from Divnl.

Ammunition Col.

Major E. N. Heale, 121st Pioneers.

Capt. W. B. P. Tugwell, "

" A. B. Harley, "

" W. E. Kirkwood, 97th Inf.

Joined on 8th Dec. :

Capt. C. W. Lyon, 42nd Deoli Regt.

" J. R. Cook, 21st Punjabis.

Draft of 150 R. and F. (which included some unfit reservists).

on the 28th November, when they were temporarily placed at the disposal of the Lahore Division, and moved first to Beuvry and then back to Gorre. The work, mostly at night, consisted of putting up wire and digging support and communication trenches. To trace out a trench on a compass bearing and get the men on to

the work in the mud, on a wet, dark December night was not always so simple as it sounds. The men had to work under desultory unaimed fire, and on most nights there were a few casualties, among them being Capt. Darley,† who was wounded on the 15th December. The men, however, got back to billets by dawn and so had the day in which to clean off the mud and get some rest.

On the 12th December the 107th Pioneers had

* Capt. Griffith was Adjutant till the end of January, when he went to a Staff appointment, and was succeeded as Adjutant by Capt. Carlisle, just released from hospital.

Major Heale and Capt. Lyon, after a few days, were transferred to the 34th Sikh Pioneers. Later Lieut.-Col. Heale died from the effect of enemy gas, when he was commanding the 13th Northumberland Fusiliers Pioneers.

Capt. Cook remained with the 107th for three months, when he was transferred to the 47th Sikhs and was killed at the 2nd Battle of Ypres on the 26th April, 1915.

† Capt. Darley, on recovery, was attached to the 4th Gurkhas and was again wounded on the 27th April, 1915. His leg was amputated and he later died from the effects of this wound.

marched to new billets at Le Touret, and on the 18th the Sikh and Rajputana Mussalman companies (Major Keelan and Capt. Harley) were placed at the disposal of the Garhwal Brigade, who were to carry out one of the "active local operations" ordered by General Headquarters. At 3.15 a.m. on the 19th, the 2nd Leicestershire and a company of the 2/3rd Gurkha Rifles charged forward and captured a short length of German front line trench and a portion of a communication trench leading from it. Capt. Harley then took up his company and converted the communication trench into a fire trench and reversed the captured front trench to face towards the enemy, but so great was the crush of infantry and Pioneers in the trenches that it was difficult to work. The Pioneers also assisted by fire in stopping an enemy counter-attack. Having completed their work the Pioneers returned to Le Touret. Shortly afterwards the enemy so heavily bombed the captured trenches that they had to be abandoned.

At daylight on the 20th December, the enemy retaliated by a severe bombardment of heavy artillery and trench mortars against the whole front of the Indian Corps and some mines were exploded beneath the trenches, followed by attacks which captured some trenches East of Festubert and around Givenchy; so severely was the Indian Corps being shaken that an enemy break through appeared to be imminent. The 107th Pioneers had no part in this fighting, except that on the night of the 20th/21st they dug a retrenchment near the captured "Orchard" position, and during the following days, with the 4th Cavalry, they held some reserve trenches. Round about this reserve position huge German shells occasionally exploded, which were probably searching for our batteries, whilst at the door of a near-by cottage a group of French women and children calmly watched the bombardment. The 3rd and the 1st (Guards) Brigades of the 1st Division came up to assist the Indian Corps, the splendid bearing of the Guards being much admired as they passed the 107th.

The enemy attacks were gradually stemmed and the situation became stabilized, though a pocket of our trenches, varying from 50 to 200 yards in depth on a mile front, remained* in German hands. The 1st Corps now took over this front from the Indian Corps, which went into reserve around Lillers, where they were able to rest and reorganize.

The 107th Pioneers moved to near Locon on the 24th December, and on the fine and frosty Christmas morning of 1914 they marched to their billets at Cornet Bardois, just outside Lillers, and about 15 miles behind the front, where they remained until the morning of the 31st January.

This time of rest was spent in various kinds of training, including frequent route marching, which kept the men fit. All the British officers got a week's leave to England, going in batches of 3 or 4 at a time; a much appreciated privilege, as obtaining leave whilst on active service was a new idea to them.

On the 15th January, 1915, some brigades of the Indian Corps had moved again to the front, the machine guns of the 107th, under Capt. Cook, going with the Dehra Dun Brigade, and at the beginning of February the Meerut Division took over their old front, with the Lahore Division in reserve. The 107th Pioneers marched with the Bareilly Brigade to Vieille Chapelle on the 31st January, thence battalion headquarters, and 2 companies moved to Les Mesplaux and the other 2 companies to Richebourg St. Vaast. February was a quiet month on the British front, with only intermittent shelling and sniping; the arrival of

Joined in January, 1915:

Capt. W. B. Macleod, 121st Pioneers.

„ S. G. C. Murray, 12th (K.I.G.) Pioneers.

1 Indian Officer, 74 R. and F.

12th February:

Capt. A. T. Sheringham, 121st Prs.

†2 Indian Officers, 85 R. and F.

1st March:

Major S. B. Watson, 64th Pioneers.

Other small drafts of R. and F.

joined from time to time.

11th May:

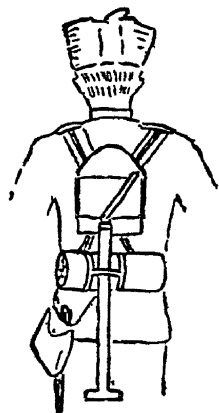
Capt. E. H. Chapman

* This was retaken by the 1st Corps on the 15th May, 1915.

† These were all Jats, who had been transferred from the 107th to the 121st in 1911.

good hand-grenades, Verey lights, a more plentiful supply of ammunition for the guns and a general improvement in conditions caused a feeling of optimism.

The "mamootee," a hoe-like implement, carried on the backs of a proportion of Pioneers, had been found less suitable than the shovel for throwing earth out of deep trenches, and all the shovels of the battalion were carried in the pack mule loads. Major Keelan devised a method of converting the leather "mamootee" case so as to carry a light G.S. shovel, and Colonel Stevens, without waiting for sanction for altering equipment, had all the "mamootee" cases converted regimentally to carry shovels, the "mamootees" being relegated to the mule loads.



The water-level had risen so high in this part of the country that in many places trenches could not be dug down more than a foot, and existing trenches had become water-logged. The 107th, therefore, had to build a lot of breastworks, most laborious work, as hurdles and other material for the revetments had to be carried up, sometimes by themselves and sometimes by infantry working parties; and whilst piling the sticky soil against the revetments the men were more exposed to the usual stray bullets than when digging deep trenches. As the water-level fell, deep trenches were again dug, and by constant practice the men worked on the darkest night with extraordinary accuracy and speed; keeping their small G.S. shovels sharpened to a knife-edge also helped them to do "tasks" much above the average.*

* A remark by the C.R.E., Meerut Division, that he considered "the 107th Pioneers to be as useful as having four additional companies of Sappers," was regarded as a high compliment by the battalion, as they were always full of admiration for the Sappers and Miners.

In November and December, 1914, trenches had been dug rather haphazardly, as urgently required by the Brigade holding a section of the front, but now the C.R.E. (assisted in an Indian Division by two R.E. officers called Field Engineers) worked out a plan for the construction of defensive works, which was systematically proceeded with each night. When active operations did not require a special effort, in the 107th Pioneers a certain task was allotted to each company, instead of working for a given number of hours each night. As soon as it was dusk enough to walk about in the open without being seen by the enemy, the company commander, with a few men carrying tapes, etc., traced out the work to be done, and then met each of his platoons as they arrived, each platoon coming up at intervals under its Indian Officer. As each section was shown its task, the men put down their rifles, with bayonets fixed, stripped off their equipment and immediately got to work. As soon as one platoon had completed its task, this was inspected by the company commander, and then the platoon at once marched off by itself. This system caused the men to work at their maximum speed and reduced casualties by avoiding men being kept waiting about under fire. Although enemy flares sometimes came right over the men whilst working or fell amongst them, this did not show them up to the enemy if the men got down and kept still until the light went out. The Pioneers' casualties on ordinary night work were slight, sometimes they got through a night without any, whilst on other nights they would lose from 1 to 6 men killed or wounded, Jemadar Jota Singh being the only officer wounded during February. A few casualties also occurred in billets from shell fire. At this time there were many civilians, including women and children, living in Richebourg St. Vaast, although their houses were being knocked about occasionally by shells. These were all evacuated to rear areas before the Battle of Neuve Chapelle, after which the German guns destroyed most of this village.

On the 1st March* the 107th commenced to make several rows of assembly trenches close behind and parallel to the front breastworks running along the side of the La Bassée Road, opposite the village of Neuve Chapelle, and it soon became apparent that something unusual was in contemplation. Guns of all sizes began to come up each night and were hidden behind every hedge-row, until it seemed impossible to find positions for any more. The spirits of the troops rose as they realized that at last there was to be a real big attack, in place of the depressing minor affairs they had so far taken part in. Most optimistic reports were circulated as to our superiority in this part of the line. Then orders for the attack were issued. The Indian Corps and the IV Corps were to attack the German salient round Neuve Chapelle on a front of 2,000 yards, the leading troops to be the Garhwal Brigade of the Meerut Division on the right, and two brigades of the IV Corps to their left. Neuve Chapelle having been captured, the high ground from Aubers to Ligny le Grand was given as the final objective. The Bareilly Brigade was to hold the section of front line over which the Garhwal Brigade was to attack.

The rôle allotted to the 107th is shown by this extract from Meerut Division Orders :

“The following parties will be formed under detailed orders of the C.R.E. :

- (a) Half company S. and M. and two companies 107th Pioneers to assemble in the southern of the three lots of small breastworks . . . close in rear of the Bareilly Brigade Front.

* In February, 1915, a complete Sikh company of the 12th (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Pioneers—strength 4 Indian Officers, 195 R. and F., and 9 Followers—under Major R. J. Cuming, arrived in France and joined the 34th Sikh Pioneers. It served, as an intact company of the 34th, at Neuve Chapelle, 2nd Ypres, Loos and other engagements, until on the 17th December, it sailed with that regiment from Marseilles for Basra.

Capt. G. A. Clarke, 12th (K.I.G.) Pioneers, joined the 34th Sikh Pioneers on the 6th December, 1914. In March he was transferred to the 47th Sikhs and was wounded in April.

- (b) Half company S. and M. and one company 107th Pioneers to assemble in two northern lots of breastworks referred to above.

These parties, each under a R.E. Officer and equipped with necessary tools and material, will follow the Garhwal Brigade into their position of assembly and will be ready to advance when ordered to respectively put localities "C" and "D" in a state of defence."

The battalion headquarters and remaining company of the 107th were ordered to form part of the divisional reserve.

The work of these parties during the Battle of Neuve Chapelle must now be described separately, beginning with that under (b) above :—

The Sikh Company of the 107th (Capts. Tugwell and Murray) moved up from Richebourg St. Vaast at 1.30 a.m. on the night of the 9th/10th March, and spent the remainder of the night in a small breastwork, which was also used as a bomb and ammunition store, 3 or 4 paces behind the front line along the La Bassée road, in which the left battalion of the Garhwal Brigade—the 2/39th Garhwal Rifles—were assembling for the attack. The half company of the 1st Sappers and Miners, under Capt. E. F. J. Hill, R.E., who was in command of this mixed party, was in a similar breastwork a short distance away from the Pioneer company.

Long before dawn all troops were in position, and the early morning was quiet, with only the usual few registering rounds of gun fire and an occasional rifle shot. One bold enemy aeroplane circled over our crowded trenches for a few minutes. Then, at 7.30 a.m., the stillness was suddenly broken by the crash of the 350 British guns, massed on this short front, simultaneously opening rapid fire. Owing to the proximity of the German trenches, the shells passed close over our heads, a small proportion of them unavoidably bursting over or behind our own

trenches and thus laying out a few of our own troops. None of the Pioneer company were hit, though a quantity of hot shell splinters came into their trench. The noise and vibration were terrific. Through a periscope from the Pioneers' breastwork, our H.E. shells could be seen continuously bursting along the enemy front trench, while the shrapnel played on the wire entanglement, and it looked as if no one could remain alive in the German trenches. In reality few of the enemy were killed by this bombardment, though their morale was shattered by it.

At 8.5 a.m. the guns lifted on to more distant targets, and simultaneously the assaulting infantry advanced across the 200 yards of no man's land, captured the enemy front and support trenches with small loss, and pressed on through Neuve Chapelle to the line allotted as the first objective. Parties of prisoners and some captured machine guns began to come in, escorted by a few Garhwalis. The 1st/39th Garhwalis, however, on the right of the attack, had lost heavily and a stretch of uncaptured trench had been left between them and the rest of their Brigade. The battalions on the left of the IV Corps attack had also met with disaster.

Soon after the assault, Capt. Hill, R.E., and the officer commanding the Sikh company of the 107th went forward to reconnoitre a site for the redoubt to be made within the captured position. The Germans appeared to be completely knocked out for the time being, as these two officers could walk about in the open, up to where our advanced line was lying and in full view from the Bois du Biez, without hearing a single bullet. Looking back they were disappointed to see no sign of fresh troops coming up to carry forward the attack. Having traced out a strongpoint, afterwards known as Hill's Redoubt, in a small orchard within the triangle of roads South of the village, they brought up their men who at once started on the work. This orchard jutted out into a large expanse of plough-

land and its trees formed an easy mark for the German artillery. To its right rear were several ruined houses. Amongst some fresh corpses near the orchard were lying the still unburied bodies of some of our troops who had been driven out of Neuve Chapelle at the end of October.

Soon after starting work, the Pioneer company found themselves being shot at, probably by snipers hidden in one of these houses, who had been passed over by the assault and now pluckily commenced to assert themselves, or from the length of uncaptured trench. The Pioneers had an unpleasant time, offering as they did a good target, and six men were hit by these sniping shots. A party of infantry were sent to explore these houses, and whilst they were at it the sniping stopped, but after they had returned and reported that they could find nothing, it recommenced. Later that evening seven Germans were found in one of these houses by the Seaforth Highlanders, at about the time that regiment took the length of trench left uncaptured between the 1/39th Garhwalis and the Leicestershire, which had been occupied throughout the day by some 120 Germans and a machine gun.

When the work on the redoubt had been going on for about two hours and was nearing completion, a shell fell just in front of it and another just behind it. The German gunners had got the exact range and immediately began plumping H.E. and shrapnel into the orchard, thirty more of the Pioneer company being quickly laid out, whilst the remainder continued to dig. Curiously enough the half company of Sappers working on the same redoubt lost only a few men. The redoubt was now fit for defence, though not quite completed, so Capt. Hill gave orders for the men to stop work and get away from the orchard. This they did in a steady manner and returned to the breastwork they had occupied before the assault, the Sikh company having lost over a third of their strength whilst at work. At dusk this party returned to the orchard, completed the redoubt and dug a communication trench.

The other mixed party, under (a) in the extract from divisional orders given above, was commanded by Major G. H. Boileau, R.E. The half company of the 1st Sappers and Miners and the Rajputana Mussalman company of the 107th Pioneers (Major Watson and Capt. Harley), started out at 1.45 a.m. and during the preliminary bombardment remained in a breast-work 200 yards South of the salient in our front line around the Rue du Bois-La Bassée cross roads known as Port Arthur. At 9 a.m. they moved into Port Arthur, which had been much knocked about by shell fire, losing one man killed and one wounded on the way. They were unable to get on to their allotted task until the stretch of uncaptured trench, before referred to, had been captured by the Seaforths. At dusk they moved out and dug a trench to join up our original front line with the right of the captured position, and constructed a wire entanglement.

The Mahratta company (Capts. Sheringham and Mangin) waited in a trench a quarter of a mile East of the Factory on the Rue du Bois. At 9.30 a.m. Major Boileau, R.E., sent a message that the O.C. 2nd Leicestershire Regiment thought the work could commence, which was to dig a communication trench from Port Arthur to the captured position; on arrival at Port Arthur, however, it was found that the enemy had not yet been cleared out of this portion of trench, so the company returned to its original position. Work could not be started till 2.30 a.m. that night and was completed before dawn, with a loss whilst digging of one man killed and seven wounded.

Capt. Sheringham was awarded the D.S.O. and Capt. Mangin the M.C. for bringing in a wounded Garhwali, who was lying in front of Port Arthur under fire, in view of the enemy in the uncaptured length of trench.

The Pathan company (Capt Macleod) was with the divisional reserve near Richebourg St. Vaast, Lt.-Col. Stevens and his adjutant, Lieut. Wallis, also being with this company. During the bombardment

a shell from one of our guns burst very short over this company, killing one of the Pathans. They were moved to various positions during the day, and at 11.30 p.m. reached Neuve Chapelle village, near which they dug a support trench behind our new front line.

After working within the captured position throughout the night, the Pioneer companies got back to Richebourg St. Vaast at about 7 a.m. on the 11th March, except the Pathan company, which remained out all that day. Three companies went up to work a little before dusk on the 11th, and finished their tasks shortly before the Germans delivered their counter-attack at dawn on the 12th, which was defeated with such great slaughter. On their way back the Pioneers had to keep clear of the roads, as these were being heavily shelled in preparation for the German attack.

On the night of the 12th they again worked around Neuve Chapelle, and on the night of the 13th they dug a new front trench connecting a portion of German trench, occupied by the 1/39th Garhwal Rifles after the repulse of the counter-attack, to the Crescent, a redoubt on our original front line along the Rue du Bois. Both our guns and the enemy's were active during this night and shells were bursting near the line of the new trench. Once the enemy were reported to be massing to attack our left front and the work was temporarily stopped whilst the Pioneers lined the half-finished trench; however nothing happened and the men got back to billets soon after dawn. Richebourg St. Vaast was now being so heavily shelled that the battalion moved out of it into the fields, and later into new billets on the Rue de Ponch.

Any hope of further advance beyond the line gained on the first day having vanished, the Battle of Neuve Chapelle now closed down. Although they had not fired a single shot during this engagement, the casualties of the 107th Pioneers, whilst consolidating the captured position, were 13 killed,

Subadar Genda Jat and 67 men wounded. Amongst the latter was Sepoy Phaga Singh, who was hit when carrying a message, but in spite of his wound held on and delivered it. Buglar Nathu Singh also distinguished himself by carrying in three wounded men in succession under heavy shell fire. The Battalion was mentioned for its work in this battle in Sir John French's Despatch.*

The 107th Pioneers now resumed their normal work, companies going up individually nearly every night to work on making strongpoints, communication trenches, dug-outs, putting up wire entanglements or laying tram lines. As the men returned to billets before dawn, they had a more comfortable time than the infantry in the trenches, though they did not get the periodic rests. Their casualties were lighter than those of infantry units, as although from the constant night work under fire these gradually mounted up, yet they did not have to face the devastating losses which the infantry met in the attacks.

Early in May a reinforcement of a complete company arrived from the 106th Hazara Pioneers, under Major H. W. Ashburner and Captain R. H. H. Manners, which brought the battalion up to strength but necessitated its reorganization as follows :—

No. 1 Coy.	Sikhs and Jats.
„ 2 „	Rajputana Mussalmans.
„ 3 „	Pathans and Mahrattas.
„ 4 „	Hazaras.

The senior Hazara officer, Subadar Ali Dost, was wounded during the newly arrived company's first night's work.

The battalion was usually billeted about two miles behind the front line in a group of scattered

* Awards after Neuve Chapelle : C.M.G., Lt.-Col. N. M. C. Stevens; D.S.O., Capt. A. T. Sheringham; M.C., Capt. E. B. Mangin, Lieuts. B. H. Wallis (Adj.) and F. H. F. Hornor (Qr.-Mr.); O.B.I., Subadar-Major Labh Singh, Subadars Hari Singh, and Hashmatdad Khan; I.O.M., Bugler Nathu Singh; I.D.S.M., Colour-Havildar Dial Singh, Havildar Powa Singh, L.-Nk. Mohan Singh. Subsequently further awards were received on various occasions.

farmhouses, barns and cottages. The mess of the British Officers was sometimes in the "estaminet" (or village inn), outside which every morning after breakfast, could be seen drawn up the mess horse and trap, ready to take the French interpreter, Arnaud Coste, into Béthune or some other town. The mess servants, particularly the Mess-havildar, prided themselves on the amount of French they had picked up. The British Officers of Indian units scored in having their civilian Indian servants with them, both the mess servants and the officers' bearers proving themselves very useful in France, and being unperturbed when they occasionally came under shell fire. The C.O. and his staff usually slept in or near the mess, the other British Officers having their sleeping quarters in farms or cottages near their companies. The British officers' custom of having frequent baths amused the inhabitants, who did their best to help by providing wooden tubs. The men were lodged in the big barns and other farm buildings; a barn, with its lofts, providing good accommodation. The British drivers of the regimental transport, after the Indian transport had been taken away for service in Gallipoli, were billeted separately near the transport lines, where the officers' chargers were also kept. These chargers were of little use in France; bicycles might have been more suitable. The only French inhabitants left in these farms were women, children and a few old men, the pluck and cheerfulness of these women, and the manner in which they carried on the farm work, being admirable. The sepoys, being themselves peasants, had great sympathy with these people, and got on remarkably well with them, so much so that these women said that they preferred having Indians billeted on them to any other troops, even French, as the sepoys were so quiet, friendly and well behaved and were always ready to lend a hand when they had an opportunity to help.

To talk to everyone in his native tongue within the billeting area of the 107th would have required a

knowledge of eight languages :—French for the inhabitants, English for the British officers and transport drivers, Pushtu for the Pathans, Mahratti, Hindustani for the Rajputana Mussalmans, Hindi for the Jats, Gurmukhi for the Sikhs and Persian for the Hazaras.

As things settled down to what appeared to be an interminable state of trench warfare, many improvements for the troops were introduced, amongst which Divisional Bath-houses, where the men were issued with clean underclothes after their bath, and an occasional cinema performance in a barn, were much appreciated by the sepoys. The Mahrattas of the 107th organized dramatic performances and country dancing, which entertained both the men and the inhabitants.

The notices about spies, occasionally circulated by the Corps staff, were the cause of embarrassment to some individuals. Subadar-Major Labh Singh arrested a suspicious looking character walking around the billets with a map, who turned out to be a Colonel commanding an Artillery Brigade; and Captains Macleod and Mangin, whilst engaged in a water reconnaissance, were arrested by a sergeant of a Highland battalion, and marched under escort to divisional headquarters, where they received an hilarious welcome.

Early in May, Sir Douglas Haig's Army staged an attack in support of a French offensive towards Lens. The I Corps, with its right on Givenchy, was ordered to attack the trenches opposite Festubert; the Indian Corps to cover the left of the I Corps and to capture the Ferme du Biez position; and the IV Corps to break through the enemy line near Rouges Bancs. The Meerut Division was to carry out the Indian Corps attack, with the Dehra Dun Brigade leading the assault.

The companies of the 107th Pioneers had been detailed to consolidate various places within the enemy position as soon as it was captured, and by

3.30 a.m. on the morning of the 9th May, the day fixed for the assault, the battalion, along with two companies of Sappers and Miners, arrived at a "grid-iron" of assembly trenches near St. Vaast. Here they remained in idleness all day, under occasional shell fire, as both the attack by the Dehra Dun Brigade, and a later attack by the Bareilly Brigade, were repulsed.

The machine gun section of the 107th Pioneers, under Captain Carlisle, which had been for some days in the front line, at 5.30 a.m. went over with the first wave of the assault with the 2nd Bn. 2nd Gurkha Rifles of the Dehra Dun Brigade. As soon as they got over the top of the parapet they were met by heavy machine gun and rifle fire, which mowed down the assaulting troops. Two sepoy of the section fell at once, and the rest carried the guns to a small ditch full of water about 20 yards ahead, where Captain Carlisle was hit and unable to move. He said he would wait till nightfall to get back to the line, but Sepoy Sunda Singh, putting his officer on his back, carried him back under the heavy fire to the front trench. The section, of which Naik Dial Singh had taken command, received an order to retire, as the attack had failed, so this N.C.O., behaving with complete coolness under the appalling fire, brought his section, with its machine guns and equipment, back within our front line. Two days later Captain J. E. G. Carlisle died from his wounds.

Another attack by the Meerut Division on the 15th was unsuccessful, but meanwhile on its right the I Corps had recaptured the trenches before Festubert, lost in December, 1914, and had advanced some distance beyond. The 107th Pioneers were placed at the disposal of the 2nd Division to assist in consolidating the captured position, their work consisting of digging communication trenches from our original front line to the captured German trenches and repairing fire trenches; during which work, spread over several days, their casualties amounted to 4 killed



SUBADAR-MAJOR RAM SINGH, SIRDAR BAHADUR,
Chobdar to H.M. The King-Emperor at Delhi, 1911.

and 34 wounded. The ground over which they worked was almost carpeted over with dead bodies and in some places the trenches had been destroyed by shell fire, and the men of the 107th were impressed by the heavy losses the British troops had endured in order to get forward.

The battalion were near the Canadians at this time, the first Dominion troops they had met, and got on very well with them.

Soon after this the 107th returned to their own Division, being billeted at Les Huit Maisons and later at Riez Bailleul, and were employed until the middle of July in strengthening the line and improving communications, during which they had only occasional casualties on night work. Their billets were sometimes shelled, usually without much damage, though on one occasion a shell fell in the middle of party playing cards, killing 3 and wounding 8 men.

In order that the Mussalmans should be able to keep the fast of Ramzan, which commenced in the middle of July, Sir James Willcocks arranged for the Indian regiments to be withdrawn to around Merville for a rest, which for the 107th lasted for ten days. The battalion then returned to its billets at Riez Bailleul and was employed in digging a new reserve line, in constructing dug-outs and on preparations for the next attack.

Lt.-Colonel P. J. H. Aplin, D.S.O., who commanded the 107th Pioneers in Somaliland in 1902-04, and had been "dug-out" to command the 18th Middlesex Pioneers, was attached for experience to his old battalion for a few days in August.

Early in September, Major-General Claud Jacob took over the command of the Meerut Division from Sir Charles Anderson, who obtained command of the Indian Corps on the departure of Sir James Willcocks. General Jacob, who had raised the 106th Hazara Pioneers in 1904, came to France as G.S.O. 1 of the Meerut Division and later had commanded the Dehra Dun Brigade.

The Battle of Loos commenced on the 25th September, after a deliberate bombardment of four days. The part in this battle allotted to the Meerut Division was to make a diversion by attacking the German position around Mauquissart, about a mile N.E. of Neuve Chapelle. The Bareilly and Dehra Dun brigades were ordered to lead the assault. Having broken through the enemy trenches, the Division was to press on in a south-easterly direction to assist the main offensive in the South.

The tasks allotted to the 107th Pioneers were for two companies to connect up our front line with the German trenches, as soon as the latter had been captured, another to put the crater of a mine, which was to be exploded under an enemy trench, in a state of defence, whilst the fourth company remained in reserve at their billets. The three companies assembled in trenches behind the Rue de Tilleloy during the night of the 24th. The machine gun section, now increased to four guns, had been in the trenches for some days, and was employed in keeping the enemy approaches under indirect fire.

At 5.48 a.m. on the 25th September, the mine, charged with a ton of explosives, went up with a great roar, leaving a crater 92 feet across, and our intense bombardment commenced. At 6 a.m. our infantry went over the top, amidst clouds of smoke and gas, which was being used for the first time by the British.

At 7.5 a.m. the Pioneers received a message from the C.R.E. that the enemy's firing and support trenches were in our hands, though actually this was only partially correct. No. 1 Company (Jats and Sikhs) therefore moved up to the Bird Cage salient to commence work on joining up with the captured position by digging along the line of an old fallen-in trench. Major Keelan and the leading men of his company had no sooner got over our front parapet, than a salvo of H.E. shells burst along the line of the old trench, wounding Major Keelan and twenty-one

men. Captain Murray then assumed command of the company, but the fire continued to be so heavy that he decided it was impracticable to dig in the open, so he took the company back under cover. Sepoy Uda Ram helped Major Keelan back over our parapet under heavy fire.

Major Ashburner had meanwhile taken the Hazara company up to another point in our front line, also to dig a communication trench, but on arrival he found that the Germans were still in possession of the trench opposite to him, so work could not be commenced.

The situation did not progress sufficiently for No. 3 company to be called on to fortify the mine crater.

At 2.30 p.m. the C.R.E. told the Pioneers to return to billets, as our infantry had been driven out of the enemy trenches by counter-attacks. Unfortunately some of the 58th Rifles and other units, who had fought their way through many lines of trenches and had penetrated as far as the Moulin de Piètre, were surrounded and never returned. That they held out to the last was evident from the sounds of fighting heard for hours after the Germans had reoccupied the whole of their original front line.

After this battle* our communication trenches were in a bad state from slush and mud, and the 107th worked on improving them and putting down floor-boards. One party made a track of planks to enable two field guns, which had been used as an experiment in our front fire trench, to be removed.

On the 1st October the battalion moved South and were billeted in the old château at Gorre, which had been only slightly damaged by shell fire. The weather had been very wet, the Pioneers were employed in keeping the trenches passable, draining the position at Festubert and Givenchy and repairing

* In a Meerut Division Order issued after this battle, General Jacob, in referring to the 107th Pioneers, stated that "No praise can be too high for the work they have done throughout the war."

the front line where it had been damaged by enemy mines. On the 20th they returned to Les Huit Maisons and continued to work on preparing the trenches around Neuve Chapelle for the oncoming winter, making some new breastwork communication trenches, for use when the water level should rise, instead of the deeply dug ones.

Amongst the casualties sustained whilst on this work, Subadar Hashmat Dad, a very fine Indian Officer remarkable for his fatalistic contempt for danger, was killed near Windy Corner by long range machine-gun fire, and Jemadar Gora Ram was wounded.

On the 2nd November the battalion received a report that the Indian Corps was shortly to leave France, and there was much speculation as to its destination, Egypt and Gallipoli being the favourites in a sweepstake held in the Mess. The next day all stores surplus to those brought to France, such as gas masks and periscopes, were handed in and the heavy draught horses and G.S. wagons were exchanged for mules and limbered wagons. On the 4th the battalion was taken by motor buses to Rue D'Aire, 2 miles West of St. Venant.

The 107th Pioneers, under the command† of Major Watson, entrained at Berguette on the 7th and arrived, minus one sepoy who fell out of the train, at Marseilles late at night on the 9th November. By 7 a.m. the next morning they had embarked on the s.s. "Aronda," along with the 39th Garhwalis and the H.Q. Garhwal Brigade, and were soon at sea, bound for Egypt, where, it was understood, the whole Indian Corps was to concentrate.

For the sake of economy of space, all the battalion transport had sailed on another ship—the s.s. "Urlana"—which later on was to prove an unfortunate mistake.

The 107th Pioneers, less transport, arrived at Port Said on the 16th November and the following day

† Lt.-Col. Stevens had recently gone sick.

proceeded by rail to Tel-el-Kebir, where they bivouacked in the desert and commenced to prepare a camp for the expected two Indian Divisions. The old trenches from which the Egyptians were driven in the battle of Tel-el-Kebir of 1882 were plainly traceable and some old red coats and bayonets were dug up whilst working on the camp site. Meanwhile the critical state of affairs in Mesopotamia had caused the Indian Corps to be diverted to that country.

On the 20th November, 1915, the 107th Pioneers entrained for Suez, where they immediately embarked on the s.s. "Coconada" and sailed for Basra.

CHAPTER X

1914—1915

“ BASRA ” “ SHAIBA ” “ KUT-AL-AMARA, 1915 ”
 “ CTESIPHON ” “ DEFENCE OF KUT-AL-AMARA ”

THE 48th Pioneers received their mobilization orders on the 13th August, 1914, whilst stationed at Kirkee. After being allotted in turn to several Expeditionary Forces, they were finally detailed to the divisional troops of the 6th (Poona) Division. This Division was at first intended for service in France with the other two Indian Divisions, but the growing probability of Turkey joining our enemies caused it to be diverted to Mesopotamia.

One of its Brigades, with mountain artillery and a sapper company, under the command of Brig.-Gen. W. S. Delamain, was ordered to sail on the 16th October to the head of the Persian Gulf to protect British interests, especially the oil installation at Abadan in Persia, and whilst this force was still at sea, news was received that we were at war with Turkey.

General Delamain left a detachment at Fao, at the mouth of the Shatt-al-Arab, which place he had seized after a slight engagement on the 6th November, and then sailed up the river to near Abadan, where he landed his brigade on the Turkish bank of the river at Sanniya, almost opposite to the oil-works. On the night of the 10th/11th he easily defeated an attack on his camp.

In the meantime it had been decided that our troops should occupy Basra, and that the remainder of the 6th Division should be despatched under the command of Lt.-General Sir A. Barrett.

The 48th Pioneers embarked at Bombay on the s.s. "Aronda," and with four other transports carrying divisional headquarters, a battery, 3 infantry battalions and some other details, arrived off Sanniya at mid-day on the 14th November, 1914; the remainder of the transports being unable to come up the river at the same time through lack of pilots.

Lt.-Col. A. J. N. Harward.
 Major H. J. Riddell.
 Capt. C. W. Neumann.
 " M. E. S. Johnson.
 " A. Vickers.
 " G. Hewett.
 " R. D. Corbett.
 " D. B. Gray.
 Lieut. G. B. Davies, Adjt.
 " E. N. Burdett.
 " I. Ferrier.
 " C. A. Raynor.
 Capt. W. C. Spackman, I.M.S.

Subadar-Major Dula Singh,
 18 Indian Officers and
 815 Rank and File,
 92 Followers.

Composition.

Nos. 1 and 3 Coys.*—Jats.
 " 2 " 4 " —Lobana Sikhs.

Whilst these reinforcements were disembarking on the 15th, Gen. Delamain's force marched four miles up the river bank, drove off a small Turkish force at Saihan, captured their camp and returned to Sanniya.

General Barrett having decided to shift his camp some eight miles farther up the river bank, his force moved out of Sanniya at 5.15 a.m. on the 17th and marched along the open desert, parallel to the date groves fringing the river bank. The 48th Pioneers marched with the main body. Two Naval sloops and some armed launches sailed up the river, keeping abreast of the advanced guard on shore, and all the baggage was carried on ships.

At about 9.30 a.m., soon after our cavalry patrols had reported that the enemy were entrenched near Sahil, a very heavy rain-storm came on, spoiling visibility and turning the surface of the desert into ankle-deep gluey mud, which made rapid movement difficult and upset intercommunication. The strength of the enemy at Sahil, it was subsequently discovered,

* At this time called "Double-company," for which the later name of "Company" is used throughout this Chapter.

was 1,200 regular infantry, with 8 guns, and a larger force of Arabs.

Our infantry having deployed for the attack, at 11.45 a.m. the enemy's guns, rifles and machine guns opened fire along his whole front, the smoke from the black powder used by the Arabs showing up the part of the trenches held by them.

The 48th Pioneers had been detailed for the general reserve, but soon after the action had started a senior Staff Officer rode up to the battalion, waved his hand and shouted "Push on, push on"; so in obedience to this enlightening Operation Order, the Pioneers duly started to push on. After advancing some 200 yards the Adjutant, who was with the C.O. at the head of the battalion, ran to another Staff Officer and extracted from him the further order that their objective was a mound, which subsequently turned out to be an old fort. Whilst still in close formation the battalion was caught by artillery fire, but quickly shaking out, continued to advance. The enemy's rifle fire now began to tell. The right half battalion advanced into a gap between the Dorset on their left and the 104th Rifles on their right, and were soon in the firing line. The left half battalion, which was following in support, was diverted to the right by General Delamain, and advanced through the edge of the date groves in support of the 104th. Casualties now became frequent and it was noticed that effective fire was coming from a concealed trench to the left, which enfiladed part of the firing line. Fire was concentrated on this trench and Subadar Gunga Singh and his platoon, who had worked up near to it, were just about to rush it with the bayonet, when the enemy bolted from the trench, leaving behind a number of casualties and one unwounded Turkish officer.

At about this time, one of the machine guns of the 48th was put out of action, by the tripod breaking on being dropped when the two men carrying the gun were simultaneously hit.

At 1.15 p.m. the Turks evacuated the fort and at

the same time they began a rapid retreat from all their trenches. The British force followed on as fast as the heavy going would let them, and passed through the enemy position, the 48th being amongst the first to reach the edge of the Turkish camp, two miles North of the fort. Here the Pioneers were stopped by General Delamain, but the pursuit was carried on by part of the force until late in the afternoon, some abandoned guns and other material being captured. In this fight, which was their baptism of fire, the 48th suffered ninety casualties,* including Captain Vickers and Lieut. Ferrier wounded. The next day Colonel Harward was "on the mat" before the G.O.C. for having had so many casualties whilst his Battalion was only in reserve!

During the action the gale had wrecked several "mahailas" on the river, one of which contained the baggage of the 48th, the loss of which caused much discomfort. Some men of the baggage guards were drowned, but those of the 48th swam safely ashore, after divesting themselves of all encumbrances.

The new British camp was formed about 2 miles down stream from the old fort, and that night the 48th Pioneers were on outpost duty from the old fort (inclusive) to the river. There was a lot of hostile firing during the night, seven men of the 48th being hit by shots fired from the palm groves between the outposts and the main body, where some of the enemy had apparently been left. The Pioneers were withdrawn to camp next morning and were employed all day in making roads over the mud with palm leaves, and ramps of palm logs on the river bank to assist in the disembarkation of stores. The battalion was again on outpost on the night of the 20th/21st, when one man was wounded.

As soon as the Pioneers got back to camp on the morning of the 21st they received orders to be ready to march for Basra at 8 p.m. A launch had come down the river bringing some British residents of

* Total casualties, British, 489. Turkish, approx. 1,500 and 150 prisoners.

Basra, who said that the town had been evacuated by the Turks and was being looted by the Arabs. A small force was at once sent up the river in the sloops.

At 8 p.m. General Barrett and his force commenced the 28 mile march from Sahil to Basra. Many banks and water-channels crossed the line of march, so the Pioneers and the Sapper company had to work at high pressure throughout the night-march in making crossing places for the guns. The force reached the outskirts of Basra at mid-day on the 22nd November. Despite having both to march and work, the 48th arrived in good fettle, without any man having fallen out. Carrying the Pioneer equipment on the back was found on this occasion, as on many others, to be most useful.

On the 23rd part of the force made a ceremonial entry into Basra and hoisted the Union Jack on one of the principal buildings. Basra at this time was in a filthy condition and the presence of water everywhere near the surface of the ground made the work of improvement difficult. The lack of jetties, roads and bridges kept the Sappers and the 48th Pioneers hard at work for several weeks. As well as much road making and clearing of sites, the 48th constructed six trestle bridges, many culverts and two reservoirs. They also helped to convert a hired transport into a hospital ship. Their labours were somewhat hampered by all their smith's and carpenter's tools having been lost in the wrecked "mahaila" at Sahil, until other tools were found in a Turkish workshop.

Early in December a detachment under General Fry advanced and, after a sharp fight, occupied Qurna, a dirty little town at the confluence of the Tigris and the northern channel of the Euphrates. The tradition that Qurna was the site of the Garden of Eden evoked some caustic comments by the troops!

On the 23rd December, battalion headquarters and Nos. 3 and 4 companies of the 48th were sent in the "Mejidieh" up to Qurna, leaving the other two companies at Basra. On arrival they were ordered

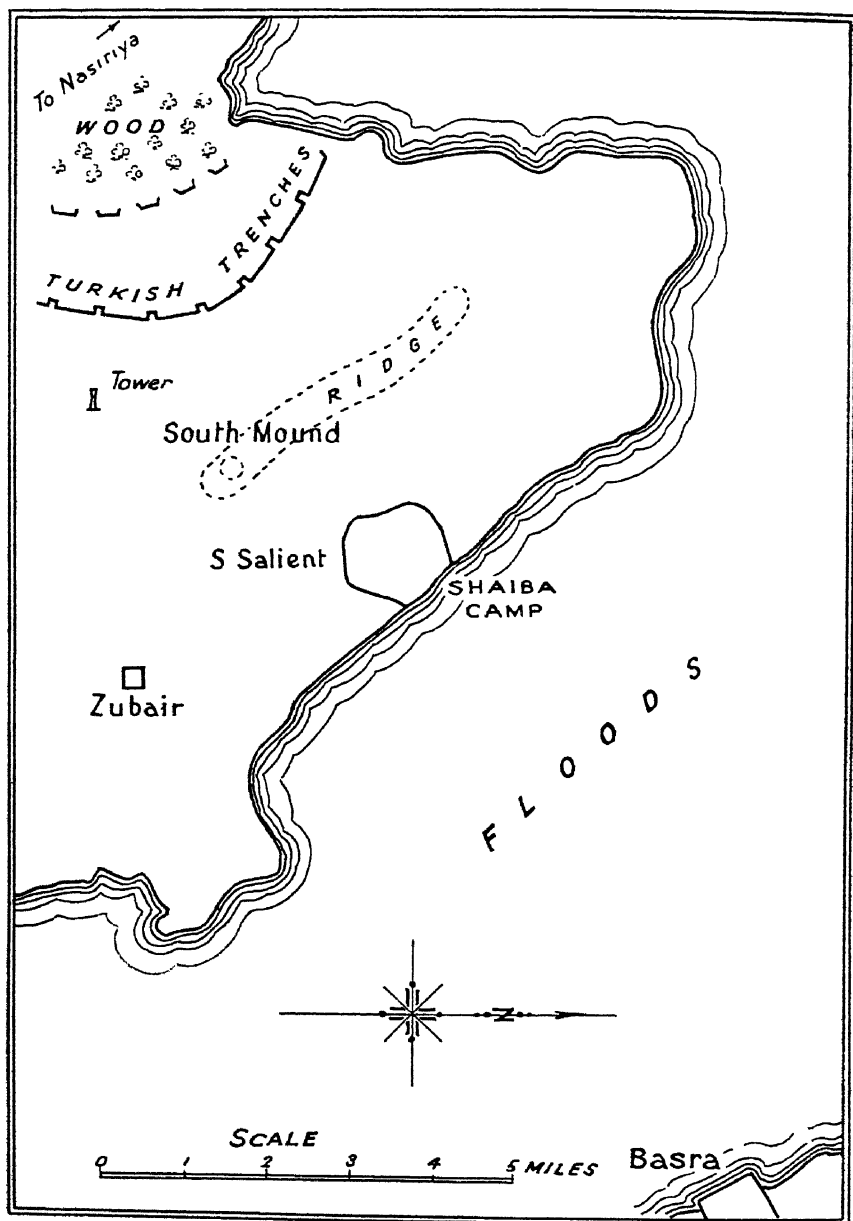
to camp beyond the line hitherto held by the garrison, with one flank near an Arab village, which was said to be friendly. That night some Arabs, probably from this village, got into the rear of the camp, did some knifing amongst the followers' tents and fired into the officers' tents. One "Marsh Arab" was bayoneted on the perimeter and traces of others having been wounded were discovered next morning. This incident had a good effect upon the men, who never failed again in being quick witted at night. During January, 1915, they worked on the defences of Qurna, also on making roads and landing places on both banks of the Tigris. On the 20th they crossed to the left bank of the Tigris to hold the Mazaira posts during the reconnaissance of the Turkish position near the Ruta creek. The floods soon began to give much trouble in Qurna and by the middle of February the scene from the ramparts resembled a sea more than a desert, the whole countryside being under water.

Meanwhile the other two companies at Basra had been kept busy on building blockhouses and on a variety of other work. On one occasion they accompanied a column sent out to search for hidden arms in Arab villages. On the 19th February this half battalion, under Major Riddell, proceeded to Shaiba, the western outpost of Basra, nine miles from that town. The floods from the Euphrates now covered the whole desert between Basra and Shaiba, in places to a depth of three feet and supplies had to be carried across mostly on the country boats called "bellums." After taking part in a reconnaissance, the two companies returned to Basra on the 22nd, and two days later No. 2 Company again went to Shaiba, leaving No. 1 in Basra. Amongst other work, these two companies were now employed in trying to dig a boat canal through the mire from Basra to Shaiba; a crowd of Arab coolies also worked on this canal under Pioneer supervision.

On the 12th March, the half battalion at Qurna

BATTLE OF SHAIBA

12TH - 14TH APRIL, 1915.



moved down the river in the "Blosse Lynch" and joined No. 1 Company in Basra, and on the 6th April the three companies marched, or rather waded, to Shaiba, where the whole Battalion was re-united and temporarily attached to the 17th Brigade. For this nine mile "wade" to Shaiba the Indian troops were ordered to remove their boots and putties, and they appeared to suffer less from exhaustion than the British Infantry, who kept theirs on.

Two infantry brigades, with cavalry and artillery, under Major-General C. I. Fry,* had been concentrated at Shaiba because of the advance of a strong force of Turkish regular troops and Arabs down the Euphrates, with the intention of attacking Basra from the West and driving the British out of Mesopotamia.

The British entrenched camp was situated with its open eastern face on the edge of the flooded area. The 48th Pioneers held the South Salient, and on their left were the 17th Company 3rd Sappers and Miners, with the Norfolk's machine gun section and a searchlight.

At 5 a.m. on the 12th April the approach of the Turkish attacking force against the South Salient of the defences was discovered by the observation piquets, who then withdrew into the position. General Fry recorded in his report that "No. 7 piquet was withdrawn with such skill and coolness by No. 305 Havildar Harchand, 48th Pioneers, that the enemy continued to fire into the piquet position after it had been evacuated. No. 368 Naik Hukmi, of the same regiment, refused to leave until the last man had got safely away."

The enemy's first attack was checked, and at 6 a.m. a more determined attack was made mainly against the South Salient, but by 7 a.m. this had been repulsed, the 48th Pioneers having lost only 1 man killed and 7 wounded, whilst the Turks had lost heavily, especially from the machine guns of the 48th and the Norfolk.

* Maj.-Gen. C. J. Melliss, V.C., came out to Shaiba on evening of 12th April and took over command the next day.

The enemy withdrew to about 1,700 yards from our trenches, where they entrenched themselves. The salient was under intermittent fire throughout the day from two of the enemy's 12.5 cm. guns. At 2 p.m. the Turks resumed their attack, but this died away an hour later, being followed by sniping and some artillery fire. At dusk a vigorous attack developed against the South Salient, and one of the Norfolk's machine guns and the searchlight were put out of action.

The enemy attack is thus described in General Fry's report :—

“Throughout the night intermittent firing with occasional bursts of machine gun fire took place to cover bold attempts to cut our wire entanglements, especially in the South Salient, where the enemy's main effort was concentrated. The brunt of the attack fell upon the 48th Pioneers and 17th Company Sappers and Miners, which units, with ceaseless vigilance, repelled every effort of the enemy. At 11.0 p.m., the enemy was heard digging close to the South Salient and a half double company of the 48th was held in readiness to meet any penetration by the enemy. The night passed with occasional lulls until 3.30 a.m., when the final attempt was made and small parties were seen close up to the entanglements—one party was heard to call out in Hindustani ‘Do not fire.’

“I wish to bring forward to special notice the very gallant defence made by the 48th Pioneers and 17th Company Sappers and Miners, who bore the brunt of the enemy's attack. All ranks behaved with great steadiness and their vigilance and good shooting repelled all the attempts of the Turkish forces to break through the defences.”

The next morning some of the enemy were found to be entrenched within 150 yards of the South Salient, and being pinned down to their trenches by our fire, 7 Turkish officers and 112 ranks surrendered later in the morning.

About mid-day half the 48th, under Major Riddell, moved out of camp with the 2nd Norfolk to reinforce the left of the 16th Brigade, which was engaged in clearing the front. After some fighting, in which the 48th lost another 2 men killed and 7 wounded, this force returned to camp with 400 prisoners and 2 captured guns. Subadar Ganga Singh was mentioned for excellent leadership, and Pipers Chander Singh and Narain Singh for bringing in a dangerously wounded man under heavy fire. Major Riddell had also been slightly wounded but remained on duty.

The ensuing night was quiet and undisturbed.

The following morning (14th April) it was discovered that the enemy's main force had withdrawn to an entrenched position about three miles to the West of Shaiba, and General Melliss decided to attack them. Leaving the 48th Pioneers and the 104th Rifles, with some guns, to hold Shaiba camp, the rest of the force marched off at 9.30 a.m., and after driving in the hostile covering troops, attacked the entrenched Turkish army. After a severe tussle, in which the British troops lost heavily, by 3 p.m. the fight had become stationary, with the British line held up at from 200 to 300 yards from the enemy trenches, with its reserves expended.

General Melliss then sent orders for the 48th Pioneers to move out of camp with all available transport for the carriage of wounded, and to be prepared to cover a retirement, if it became necessary. A lot of vessels full of water for the wounded were loaded on the carts.

It was at this most critical time, about 4.30 p.m., just as the Pioneers with the mass of carts reached the top of a slight ridge near South Mound, whence they could be seen by the Turks, that the fortunes of the day suddenly turned. The story* goes that, a long

* The official "Mesopotamia Campaign," by Gen. Moberley, says that "there is nothing whatever in our records, nor in Turkish accounts of the battle, to suggest that there is any truth" in this story. True or not, however, the psychological effect of such an incident on the Rank and File was unlikely to be recorded.

time after this battle, some prisoners-of-war said that the effect of the 48th Pioneers with the long columns of transport carts advancing over the high ground, with the setting sun behind them, was to convince the Turks that artillery reinforcements were arriving and thus caused some of them to despair of success and commence to retreat.

The Turkish resistance appearing to weaken, the British line dashed forward with the utmost gallantry and captured the enemy trenches. There was still a second line to capture, but white flags were seen to be fluttering in it and a mass of Turks and Arabs were seen to be retreating. The exhaustion of the British ruled out pursuit, but the Turks, mercilessly harassed by their erstwhile allies the Arabs, hardly halted till they were ninety miles from Shaiba.

By 8.30 p.m. the British force, with all their wounded,† were back within Shaiba camp, the 48th, through whose position the force had retired, being the last unit to reach camp.

By April, 1915, our infantry in Mesopotamia had reached the strength of two divisions and these had been organized into a Corps under the command of General Sir J. Nixon, but this corps was under the authorized strength in artillery, pioneers, ambulances, signalling units and transport. On the 17th April, General Nixon wired to India that more Pioneers were required, but was told that none were available. The 48th, therefore, being the only Pioneer battalion in the country, had to be attached either to the 6th or 12th Division, as operations required.

Soon after the battle of Shaiba, operations were commenced to clear our eastern flank up the Karun river in Southern Arabistan of the enemy, who consisted mainly of Arabs, and No. 4 Company of the 48th (Capt. G. Hewett and Lieut. C. A. Raynor) was despatched from Shaiba on the 21st April to join the 12th Division for this campaign.

† Total British losses, 1,062. Total Turk and Arab, about 6,000.

General Gorringe's force, having crossed the Shatt-al-Arab in ships at Basra, marched 30 miles to the Karun river, and then up its right bank to near Ahwaz. Thence operations commenced against the enemy in the desert country between Ahwaz and Amara. This company of the 48th assisted the Sappers in making arrangements for the 12th Division to cross the swift and deep Kherke river, mostly on rafts made of brushwood and tarpaulins. In the fight at Kafaijiyeh they formed the vanguard of one column. They did a lot of ramping nullas, bridging and blew down some towers. On one occasion twenty men of the company swam across a river with some transport animals. The troops suffered much from the heat, lack of water and long desert marches. The operations lasted seven weeks and were completely successful. On the 22nd June No. 4 Company arrived back at Basra.

The rest of the 48th Pioneers had remained at Shaiba, with the 18th Brigade, where they worked on a new entrenched camp near Zubeir, which, although it got as far as receiving the name of Fort George, was soon abandoned as the only water available consisted of a concentrated dose of salts. On the 29th April they returned to Basra, the nine miles march taking ten hours to perform, as for much of the way* the men were up to their waists in water.

Whilst the operations in Arabistan were still in progress, it had been decided to advance from Qurna towards Amara. At this time Qurna was isolated in a flooded area, out of which stood a few islands formed by sandhills, and the advanced detachments of the Turkish force north of Qurna were entrenched on these islands. Maj.-Gen. C. V. F. Townshend, who had taken over command of the 6th (Poona) Division on the 22nd April, made the bold decision

* During this stay at Basra the 48th were, on their own suggestion, permitted by the Field Controller to run their pay accounts on the British model, as the Indian system introduced just prior to the War had proved a failure. This modified British system was eventually adopted for the Indian Army.

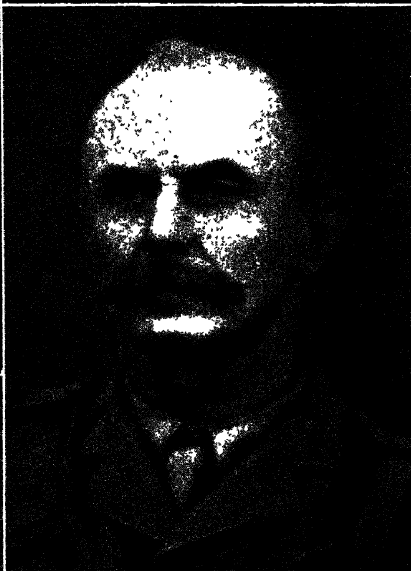
to send his troops forward to the attack across the flooded area in "bellums" and other country boats, whilst the gunboats and some of his troops in ships proceeded up the river.

The Pioneers at Basra, in addition to other work, assisted the Sappers in preparing these "bellums," some of which had armoured shields fixed across their bows. Then, on the 29th May, the 48th (less one company in Arabistan) sailed up the river in the "P 1" to Qurna and joined the rest of the force assembling for the advance.

The remarkable fight at Qurna, known as "Townshend's Regatta," commenced in the early hours of the 31st May. Under cover of artillery fire, the attacking infantry paddled forward in their "bellums," and by mid-day had captured all the islands. General Townshend then decided to postpone his attack on the enemy position in the desert beyond the flood till the next day. The Pioneers had played only a passive part in this action, being with the 16th Brigade on board barges and ships at Qurna, ready to go forward if required.

The next morning (1st June) the 17th Brigade, who had captured the islands, advanced across the desert towards the main Turkish position, whilst the 16th Brigade, with which were the 48th Pioneers, proceeded up the river in barges towed by ships, so that the troops could be landed at Bahran to assist in the attack. But to everyone's surprise it soon became evident that the Turks had abandoned their position and were in full retreat towards Amara. On arrival at Bahran the 48th disembarked and took over a lot of "bellums" from the 17th Brigade, pushed them through the reeds and paddled them where the water was unfordable, one company marching along a series of low mounds as a flank guard, as far as Maziblah, where the battalion bivouacked at midnight.

Then followed, on the 3rd June, the astonishing capture of Amara, with many prisoners of war, by -



SOME COMMANDANTS DURING THE GREAT WAR.

Lt.-Col. H. P. Keelan, D.S.O.

Colonel A. J. N. Harward, C.B.

Lt.-Col. N. M. C. Stevens, C.M.G.

Lt.-Col. A. H. D. Creagh, C.M.G., M.V.O.

General Townshend, with a few officers and only 41 soldiers and sailors, who had pursued up the river in five small armed ships, although that town was held by a considerable body of Turks.

The rest of the force followed on as fast as possible; the 48th Pioneers, leaving one company at Maziblah, sailed up the river in the "P 1" on the 4th, landed at Amara at 5 a.m. on the 6th, and were soon at work on the defences and communications. Here we must leave this half battalion for a time.

No. 2 Company, which had stayed at Maziblah, was sent back to Basra, where it arrived on the 22nd June, the same day on which No. 4 Company arrived there from Arabistan. The half battalion thus formed was then detailed to accompany General Gorrings's force, consisting of the H.Q. 12th Division, the 30th Brigade and other details, in an advance from Qurna to Nasiriya. The whole force was accommodated on ships and barges, with no land transport. Starting from Qurna it was to sail up the old North channel of the Euphrates, across the Hammar lake, through the tortuous Akaika creek and then up the main stream of the Euphrates.

Having crossed the Hammar lake, the flotilla was held up, on the 28th June, by a dam across the Akaika channel rising several feet above the water and being 30 feet broad on top. One company of the Pioneers was disembarked as a covering party, and the other company landed on the dam and commenced to dig 16 holes in it, each 8 ft. deep and 3 ft. square at the bottom, to take explosives. Soon after the work had started, two Turkish launches opened fire with pom-poms from the further side of the dam, but were quickly driven off by the British gunboats. After working most of the night, the Pioneers blew away a portion of the dam, which had several old "mahailas" buried at its base, but the rush of water through the opening was so great that only a few

Major Riddell.
Capt. Hewett.
Lieut. Raynor.
2nd Lt. Venis.
7 Indian Officers.
311 Rank and File.
17 Followers.

boats could be got through by the help of men pulling on hawsers, and it took a lot more work by the Pioneers before all the ships were got safely through by the 3rd July.

Near its junction with the Euphrates both banks of the Akaika were covered with date plantations, intersected by creeks, and enemy forces were located amongst the trees. Troops were landed on both banks and one company of the 48th cut a channel from the Akaika to a marsh to the North, so that a gun-raft could move towards the enemy's left flank. The Pioneers also felled 40 trees which impeded the view. The attack on this North bank went well, the Euphrates was reached and crossed, and some prisoners and two guns were captured. But on the South bank the attack was checked at a broad water channel running out of the Akaika. General Gorringe then ordered the other company of the 48th to reconnoitre for a crossing further to the South and as the enemy line extended for only about a mile along this channel, the company was able to get across, five men at a time in a small boat, with slight opposition. This boat was obtained by Captain Wilson, Political Department, who swam across the stream and brought it back. The Pioneer company was followed across the channel by the 1/4th Hampshire and then both advanced against the enemy's right flank, the Arabs rapidly retiring to the Euphrates, where some surrendered.

The flotilla now moved into the main stream of the Euphrates, 25 miles below Nasiriya, and proceeded up the river until they came under enemy gun fire. The troops were disembarked on the 6th July and camped on the right bank, two miles below the enemy's position. The hostile trenches were on both banks, with their outer flanks resting on marshes; on the right bank their trenches lay behind the Majinina creek. Realising the strength of this enemy position, General Gorringe sent back for reinforcements, meanwhile advancing his outpost line

towards the enemy. The 24th Punjabis and the two companies of the 48th Pioneers occupied the advanced position on the right bank, and had some skirmishing with the enemy. In these operations the Pioneers' casualties had been 2 killed, 2nd Lieut. Venis and 13 men wounded. By the 20th July reinforcements consisting of the 12th and 18th Brigades had arrived.

For the attack on the 24th, the 12th Brigade was to capture the trenches on the left bank, the 30th Brigade was to cross the Majinina creek and attack the position on the right bank, and the 18th Brigade to form the Reserve. One company of the 48th was detailed to the left bank and the other company to the right bank.

By 6.40 a.m. the 12th Brigade had captured the advanced system of enemy trenches on the left bank and the time had come for the attack on the opposite side of the river to commence.

On the right bank the Turks were in trenches some 700 yards from ours, and about 150* yards in front of their line ran the Majinina creek, 60 yards wide and believed to be unfordable. The plan was that parties from the †17th Company Sappers and Miners and the 48th Pioneers should bridge this creek to allow the infantry to assault. No close reconnaissance had been made for the bridge as the operation was to be a surprise.

Fifty-five men of the 17th Company Sappers and Miners, under Captain E. J. Loring, R.E., with two Indian Officers and forty men of the 48th Pioneers, under Captain G. Hewett, who commanded the combined detachments, had embarked on an iron barge at 4.30 a.m., which was loaded with bridging material. Also on board were thirty-five men of the 1/4th Hampshire, under Captain Parsons, as a covering party. The armed launch "Samana" (Lieut. Harris, R.N.) was in readiness to tow the barge up the river and run her aground at the entrance of the creek.

* After the assault this distance was paced; it was 148 yards.

† The 17th Company S. & M. had joined Gen. Gorrings's force on the 20th July.

As soon as the success on the left bank was known, the "Samana" started to tow the barge up the river, three other steamers moving up stream to co-operate with their fire. Every available Turkish gun and rifle opened fire on them, their decks were swept with bullets and the barge was holed by a shell, but at about 7.30 a.m. the "Samana" skilfully pushed the barge into the mouth of the creek, and the bridging parties leapt into the water. Some of the men jammed the barge across the creek, whilst the remainder threw the bridging material overboard, the Hampshire detachment lining the bank of the creek against counter-attack. The "Samana" had meanwhile withdrawn down-stream, badly damaged and pitted with bullet marks.

The construction of two trestle bridges by the Sappers and one by the Pioneers then commenced, the enemy keeping up a heavy rifle fire and shelling the barge. The working parties kept, as far as was consistent with the work in hand, under the steep bank on the enemy's side, which fortunately afforded useful cover. The bridges were completed by 8.30 a.m., by which time the Pioneers had lost Subadar Harnam Singh and two men killed, and Jemadar Sahib Singh* and eleven men wounded. The Sapper and the Hampshire detachments each had twenty casualties, including two R.E. officers wounded.

A long wait ensued after the bridges were ready, until the assaulting infantry (Hampshires and 2/7th Gurkhas) reached the South bank of the creek at 9.30 a.m. A change had meanwhile taken place. The creek flowed out of, not into, the Euphrates; the barge had dammed the flow and the creek, which had been five feet deep, was now fordable. The leading lines of infantry did not use the bridges, but were assisted through the waist-deep water by the Sappers and Pioneers, though the reserves crossed by the bridges. At 9.40 a.m. the assault went forward

* Jem. Sahib Singh died of his wounds before it was known that he had been awarded the I.D.S.M.

across the creek and the Turks bolted, leaving five field guns and a hundred prisoners*.

The Turks still had a reserve position, but when in the afternoon the British advanced on both banks, they again retreated and evacuated Nasiriya in the night. The town was occupied next day and one company of the 48th attended at the hoisting of the flag. This ended the operations, in which the Turks had lost all their guns and half their strength in casualties and prisoners.

Whilst these operations were in progress, the Battalion H.Q. and two companies at Amara received orders to join General Gorrings's 12th Division. They embarked on the 16th July and proceeded down the river to Qurna and thence across the Hammar lake to the dam, where they disembarked and were employed in hauling vessels through the gap already made. This half battalion left the dam on the 3rd August and were back in Amara on the 6th, where on the 20th they were joined by the other half battalion from Nasiriya, the whole of the 48th thus being together again with the 6th Division.

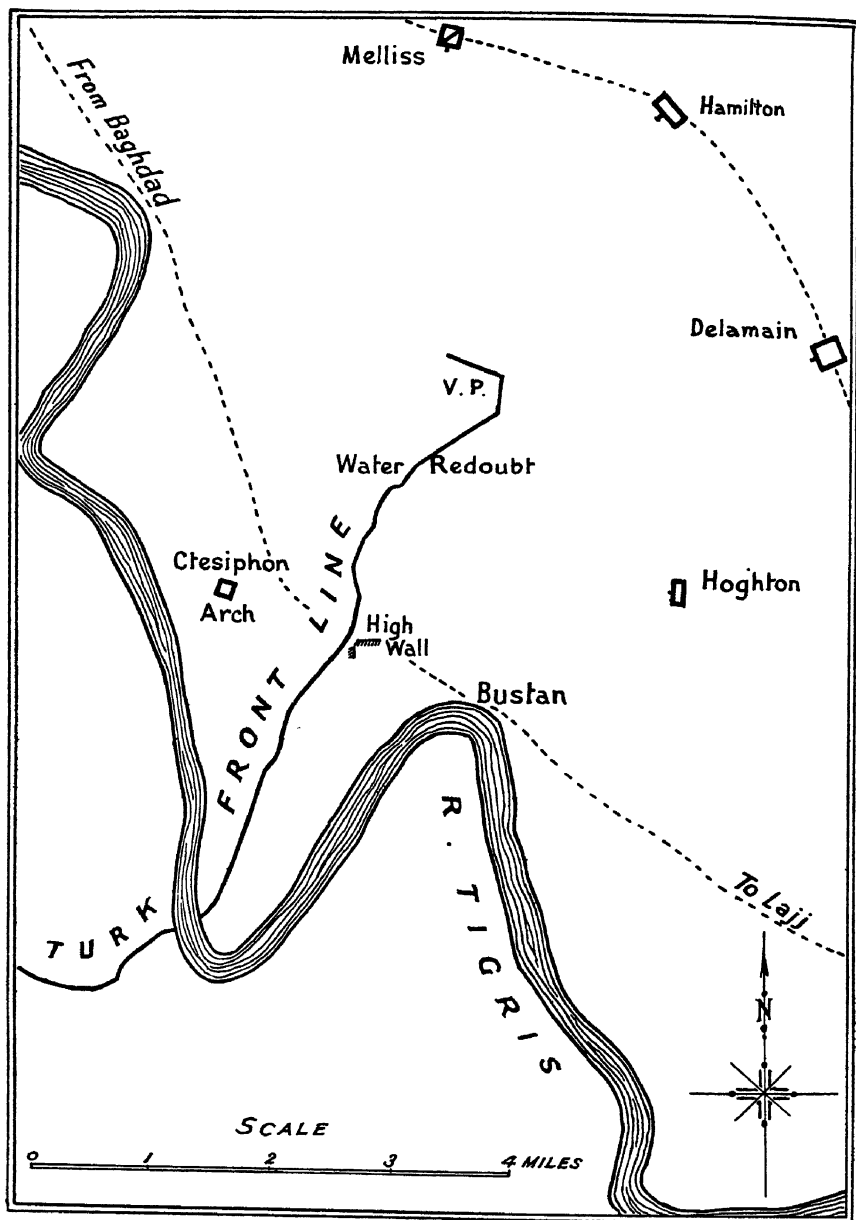
The Division moved up the river from Amara, and by the 16th September had reached Sannaiyat, eight miles from the carefully prepared enemy position covering Kut-al-Amarah. General Townshend managed to deceive the enemy into believing that the attack would be on both banks, and he then concentrated his force on the left bank, and after a difficult night march and a hard fight, he achieved a brilliant victory on the 28th September, the Turks retreating up the river.

In this battle the 48th Pioneers were employed as escort to the guns. They dug gun positions on the night prior to the attack, and helped to bring up ammunition to the guns during the action. Their only casualty was Jemadar Bhag Singh wounded by

* The Sapper and the Pioneer working parties were thanked by General Gorrings for this action. Captain Hewett was awarded the D.S.O. and others of his party received decorations.

BATTLE OF CTESIPHON

(AT 6 a.m. ON 22. II. 15)



a shell splinter. They had also assisted with the bridge of boats across the river, helped in disembarking the guns, made tracks for the "Heavies" and other such work.

Owing to the difficult navigation of the meandering Tigris, the pursuit lost touch with the Turks, who stopped their retreat at Ctesiphon and occupied an entrenched position which had been under construction for several months. The pursuing 6th Division halted at Aziziya (61 miles by land and 102 miles by river above Kut), on the 5th October, where they remained for an uncomfortable month, plagued by dust and flies. Meanwhile General Townshend had been ordered to conduct the hazardous enterprise of advancing with his depleted 6th (Poona) Division to Baghdad, and on the 11th November the advance continued towards Lajj, where the force concentrated in preparation for battle. The strength of the 48th Pioneers at Lajj was 12 British Officers, 15 Indian Officers and 694 other ranks.

The Turkish position in front of Ctesiphon consisted of fifteen redoubts, connected by a continuous line of trenches, and protected by wire entanglements, with communication trenches leading back to supporting positions. Two strong redoubts on the North flank of the line were named "V.P." (Vital Point) by General Townshend. The Turks had been reinforced; so the 6th Division was about to attack an entrenched position in which the defenders numbered nearly double the attacking force. Moreover some of the newly-arrived reinforcements consisted of better fighting material than the British had hitherto encountered in Mesopotamia.

General Townshend's plan was for a column (of which the 48th formed part) under Brig.-General Hoghton, to make a preparatory frontal attack, and as soon as this had engaged the Turks, an attack against the enemy's left flank was to be commenced by a column under General Hamilton, supported by a "Flying Column" under General Melliss. When

these attacks had made some progress, General Delamain's column was to make a decisive assault on "V.P.," whilst the other columns pressed home their attacks against the enemy.

At 2.30 p.m. on the 21st, Hoghton's column marched off and halted at 5 p.m. by the river bank 2 miles S.E. of Bustan. From here they could see the ancient Arch of Ctesiphon standing out against the setting sun. At 9 p.m. they marched northwards to their position of assembly 2 miles N.E. of Bustan. Here, in bright moonlight, they rested, as far as the bitter cold would allow them, till 5 a.m.

The other columns, starting from Lajj soon after dark, marched to their assembly positions farther to the north, as indicated in the sketch map.

At Hoghton's position of assembly No. 1 Company (Capt. Neumann and Lt. Souter) of the 48th was detailed to prepare a landing ground for aeroplanes and to remain to guard the planes from Arabs. Only three companies* of the 48th Pioneers, therefore, took part in the attack at Ctesiphon.

Hoghton's column started to advance towards the enemy's position at 6.15 a.m. on the 22nd November, 1915, the Oxford L.I. and 119th Infantry forming the first line, the 22nd Punjabis and the 3 companies of the 48th Pioneers being in support, and the guns, escorted by the 17th Company Sappers and Miners, following in rear. At 7 a.m. the guns of the Naval flotilla opened fire, and soon after Hoghton's guns joined in, some enemy guns replying against the ships.

Hoghton's infantry halted for a while at about 2,000 yards from the hostile trenches, without having drawn any fire. All that they could see was the line of wire entanglements distorted by the mirage and the enemy was so quiet that it seemed as if the position

* Other small parties had been left as guards over ships, etc., also Capt. Johnson was on Gen. Hoghton's staff and Lt. Raynor with General Nixon's staff. Hence those who took part in the assault were Col. Harward, Maj. Riddell, Capts. Oldham and Hewett, Lieuts. Burdett, Venis, Biden and D'Avrey, 10 Indian Officers and 461 men. Capt. Spackman also accompanied the battalion as Medical Officer.

might be unoccupied. The advance then continued, and at 1,000 yards range the Turks opened fire from the trenches in front and also a flanking fire from High Wall. By this time the other columns had commenced their attacks.

When Hoghton's firing line was about 700 yards from the Turks, he received a message from General Townshend to the effect that Delamain's column had captured "V.P.," the Turks were in retreat and that Hoghton was to move so as to get on Delamain's left flank. Hoghton, therefore, changed direction and commenced a flank march towards "V.P.," right along the front of the Turkish position, from which a rapid fire caused numerous casualties. Owing to the clouds of dust caused by the wind, bursting shells, and bullets, the 48th Pioneers could not see the troops in front of them, and being under heavy fire from their left flank and left front, the natural impulse of everyone was to face this fire and answer it. Considerably reduced in numbers the column reached a ditch 120 yards eastwards of the enemy line near Water Redoubt. By this time the 48th Pioneers had moved from being in support into the front line, though exactly how and when they got there is not clear.

Hoghton's force, assisted by some of Delamain's, now charged up the glacis, under a withering fire, until checked by the wire entanglements. Unknown individuals, including a number of the Pioneers, then dashed forward and, though many fell, managed to cut gaps in the wire, through which the assaulting troops passed and entered the redoubt. Here a fierce bayonet fight took place till most of the garrison, who had fought with the stubbornness characteristic of the entrenched Turk, were either killed or captured. Hoghton's column then captured another redoubt a little to the South.

The survivors of the 48th, led on by Colonel Harward, penetrated through several lines of support trenches and then opened fire at the Turks retreating

in disorder across the open, their fire causing the Turkish gunners to abandon a field battery. The Pioneers were then ordered to reform and to advance in the direction of the Arch of Ctesiphon. As they were advancing they passed through the abandoned Turkish battery,* and soon afterwards they received another order to hold on to the line reached, because Delamain's column was retiring to "V.P." before heavy enemy reinforcements. The remnants of Hoghton's force by this time were much scattered, so he recalled them to reorganize, with the intention of moving southwards down the enemy entrenchments to "mop up" any remaining garrison. The 48th Pioneers were unable to remove the four captured field guns, as they were dug in, and there was a stream to cross and no tackle available, so Colonel Harward personally removed the four breechblocks and had them buried in the centre of Water Redoubt. The guns, less their breechblocks, were recovered by the Turks after dark.

As Hoghton was reorganizing his force, he received an urgent request from Delamain for support in an attack against enemy reinforcements. Collecting a few hundred men made up of detachments from all his battalions, he moved off against the enemy holding some sandhills about $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from "V.P." After suffering still further losses, he got to within 300 yards of the sandhills, where he held on till dark.

General Townshend had meanwhile issued orders to break off the battle and for all the scattered detachments to concentrate at "V.P." for the night.

There was some confusion amongst the maze of trenches blocked with corpses at "V.P.," until the units got sorted out. The Pioneers then mustered Colonel Harward, Lieuts. Burdett and Biden, all of whom had been wounded but were able to continue on duty after being patched up by Captain Spackman,

* In memory of this event, the G.O.C., Poona, in 1924, presented an enemy field gun, with a suitable inscription, to the 48th Pioneers, as a battalion trophy. This gun is now in possession of the Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners.



PIPES AND DRUMS,
1st Battalion 2nd Bombay Pioneers.

who himself had a flesh wound, one Indian Officer—Jemadar Gurdit Singh,—and 196 Rank and File. In addition to these there was the company left at the landing-ground.

In the assault at Ctesiphon the casualties of the 48th Pioneers had been :—Killed : Major H. J. Riddell,* Captain W. S. Oldham, 2nd Lieuts. W. S. D'Avrey and A. R. Venis, Subadar Kure Ram, Jemadars Sunda Singh, Kushal Singh and Bhag Singh, and 76 men. Wounded : Captain G. Hewett (severely) and the three officers mentioned above as slightly wounded, Subadar-Major Dula Singh, Subadar Pala Singh, Jemadars Gudhara Singh, Chailu and Ramji Lal, and 183 men; or total casualties of 8 British Officers, 9 Indian Officers and 259 Rank and File, making a percentage of 57.†

Many deeds of particular daring had been performed by individuals during this battle, most of whose names are unknown, but for one such act Pipe-Major Dayal Singh, 48th Pioneers, on the recommendation of officers of another unit, received the Indian Order of Merit. He later rose to the rank of Subadar.

The next morning the 48th were shifted to the north end of "V.P.," and held the right of the captured position, where they were joined by the company from the landing-ground. A furious wind was blowing, raising clouds of dust and obscuring the view. This and occasional shelling by the enemy guns added to the difficulty of removing the wounded in the springless A. T. carts to Lajj, where they were crowded on board the few available barges and ships for their ghastly journey to Basra.

At 4 p.m. Turkish infantry were seen advancing in large numbers and, although they were checked for a time by our guns, by dusk they had approached to

* Riddell was almost worshipped by his men, who in his memory later named a village Riddellpore.

† The official "History of the Mesopotamia Campaign" gives the percentage as 38.4, which is calculated on the strength at Lajj prior to the battle, and not on the number who took part in the assault. Total British casualties were 4,593.

within 600 yards. During the night they made several attacks, but finally withdrew, with the exception of a few snipers who had got to close range and took some time to dislodge. The Pioneer equipment, which had been worn throughout the battle, proved very useful now that the battalion was on the defensive, in reversing and improving trenches. That day and night had been a sore trial, as besides the attacks of the Turks, the 48th could get no water. The following morning (24th) large numbers of Arabs could be seen riding about in front and there was further hostile shelling. The battalion had received no rations since the 21st, so were grateful to get some biscuits from the Oxford L.I., who were in support, which after a little persuasion the men gladly ate; though eating dry ration biscuit after hours of heat and dust without water is not too easy. Dry tea leaves were also received, but so far no water!

During the afternoon the battalion was ordered to move south to High Wall, where they arrived after dusk. Here they found water at last, and also rations which had been brought up and cooked ready for them by the Quartermaster, Lieut. Ferrier. The night passed quietly and also the morning of the 25th. One curious incident occurred: two Arab horsemen, apparently thinking the place was occupied by Turks, came riding close up to where the men were cooking, and although an attempt was made to capture them, they galloped safely away in spite of shots fired at them. In the afternoon, from the top of High Wall, strong Turkish columns could be seen advancing.

In the meantime, although he had captured the enemy front trench system and beaten off counter-attacks, General Townshend had reluctantly decided that he must retreat before the much superior number of Turks. At 5 p.m. orders were received to march to Lajj. Before moving off the 48th had to bury some reserve ammunition and equipment as there was insufficient transport to move it. The battalion left High Wall at 6 p.m. and reached Lajj at 11.15 p.m.,

where the next day they helped to dig a defensive position. On the 27th November the retirement continued to Aziziya, the 48th being escort to the baggage. The force left Aziziya at 9 a.m. on the 30th, and after a march of 10 miles bivouacked on the river bank at Umm at Tubul. The enemy were not known to be following up so closely, but soon after dark they opened a sudden fire from guns and rifles. This only lasted a few minutes and the rest of the night was quiet.

At 6.45 a.m. the next morning the 48th Pioneers started moving out of camp as escort to the transport. A few minutes later, as it became light, the Turkish camp could be seen only about 3,500 yards away, the Turks evidently having had no idea of how close they were to our main force. Our artillery at once opened fire, throwing the enemy into great confusion. The Turkish guns replied, causing some casualties and disorder amongst the transport animals. However, the 48th got the transport moving on the road and continued the march, while the remainder of the Division attacked the Turks. As soon as he saw an opportunity, General Townshend broke off the action and the retreat recommenced, though two gunboats and two barges had to be abandoned. In this strange affair the Pioneers had Jemadar Gurdit Singh* and two men wounded.

The Turks followed up until about 11 a.m., when their pursuit lost touch, except for Arab horsemen who hung on to our flank and fired at the transport, but were kept at a distance by machine gun fire. The Division marched 30 miles that day; the Pioneers with the transport bivouacked at 5 p.m., but the rear-guard of the Division did not arrive till the early hours of next morning. The cold at night was intense.

On the 2nd December the 48th and the transport marched at 3 a.m. and got into Kut-al-Amara, a

* Gurdit Singh was the only Indian Officer of the 48th who got through the assault at Ctesiphon unscathed, so of the 10 Indian Officers present at that action, not one marched into Kut with the battalion.

distance of 20 miles, at 1 p.m. The men were very tired, but had stuck out the whole march splendidly, without any straggling. The main body of the Division halted 3 miles from Kut, and entered the town the next morning.

Kut-al-Amara lies in the S.E. corner of a U-shaped bend in the Tigris, $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles across at the base and 2 miles deep. It had been prepared as an advanced base. At the N.E. corner of the bend in the river bank was a defensible post called the Fort, and there was an old Turkish bridge across the Tigris. The bivouac of the 48th Pioneers was situated in the palm grove N.W. of the town, and about half a mile outside it. Close in front of them on the edge of the palms was the 82nd Field Battery, and alongside of them were the 17th and 22nd Companies* Sappers and Miners. Work was soon commenced on the defences and communications, for which their equipment and training made the Pioneers particularly useful.

The Cavalry Brigade marched across the bridge out of Kut on the 6th December, 1915, and got safely away. Soon after this the Turks moved some of their troops to the down-stream side of the town. Kut was invested and the siege had begun.

The enemy started shelling Kut on the 8th, and the burst of one shrapnel shell over a trench the 48th were digging knocked out seven men. As the Turkish trenches got nearer to Kut, work had to be carried out by night and movement in the open by daylight became dangerous. The boat-bridge had been dismantled and re-erected by the Sappers nearer to Kut town, and a company of the 67th Punjabis held the bridge-head on the far bank. On the 9th the Turks attacked this company, drove it across the bridge and occupied the river bank, so it was decided that the bridge must be destroyed. Lieut. Matthews, R.E., assisted by Lieut. Sweet, 2/7th Gurkhas, under-

* Lieut. W. H. Mathias, 128th Pioneers, attached S. & T. Corps, asked to be employed with the Sappers and was posted to the 22nd Coy. He served with it throughout the siege, was wounded and awarded the D.S.O.

took the task of blowing up the bridge after dark, under close range of the Turks. Havildar Harphul and two men of the 48th, as well as a few men from the 2/7th Gurkhas, volunteered to be attached to the small Sapper party for this enterprise, which was successfully carried out, with no casualties. These three volunteers from the 48th all received the I.D.S.M.

R.E. Workshops had been started in Kut town, and the artificers of the 48th Pioneers were sent to work in them with the Sapper artificers. They were kept busy all through the siege with manufactures of many kinds, such as grenades, periscopes, pickets for entanglements and trench ladders.

On the 10th December there was heavy hostile gun and rifle fire all day, and the Turks pushed forward nearer to our front line. In the evening the battalion was ordered out in support of the 16th Brigade, but the night passed quietly. At daybreak orders were received to retire to their dug-outs before it became light. Two companies were near a communication trench, but the other two were some 300 yards from it. Movement across the open at once drew rapid fire from the Turkish trenches only about 250 yards off, so the latter two companies were ordered to enter the front line and make their way along it. This part of the front trench was still very narrow and in places not deep enough, and the Pioneers found it difficult to squeeze past the garrison without exposing themselves, and in doing so lost 4 men killed and 20 wounded.

On the 24th December the Turks commenced their one serious attempt to capture Kut by storm, their main effort being against the Fort.

The whole area of Kut was bombarded, but the gun fire was particularly heavy on the Fort, the N.E. walls of which were reduced to ruins, and the garrison of the bastion had to be withdrawn to a stockade across its gorge. At mid-day the Turks rose from their trenches, about 50 yards distant,

and delivered an assault, which was repulsed after a fierce fight. The 48th had been in readiness to support, but were not required, and the afternoon was fairly quiet.

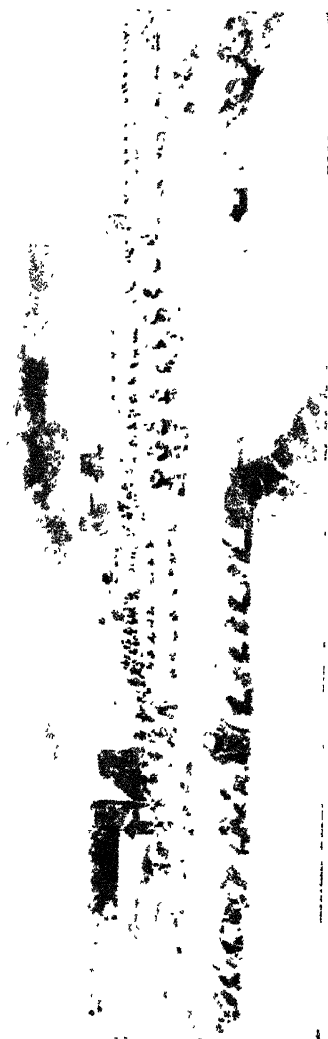
At 6 p.m. the Pioneers were ordered to go to the Fort and arrived there at 7.45. As the firing was too heavy for the perimeter to be repaired, they started work on a second line of defence within the Fort. As the moon rose at 8 p.m., the enemy started their second assault and gained the outer walls of the N.E. bastion. The garrison of the 103rd Mahrattas retired into the side galleries, as arranged, and rapid fire was opened from the stockade. In spite of this, the Turks managed to get close to the stockade and threw bombs, which killed or wounded many of the defenders, who were composed of the Oxford L.I. and a small party of men (mostly Eurasians) of the Rangoon Volunteer Battery, both of whose guns had been knocked out. The fight settled down to a fire combat at close quarters.

* "About 11 p.m. the 48th Pioneers—about two hundred strong—who with the Sirmur Sappers had been working at a second line of defence, . . . reinforced the stockade, and the remnants of the Volunteer Artillery Battery were withdrawn to join the fort reserve. The 48th Pioneers at once became involved in a stiff fight and the greater part of the first thirty of them to man the stockade were either killed or wounded, including their commanding officer, Captain Neumann. But other Pioneers, under Lieut. Raynor, took their place and gallantly defeated all Turkish efforts to get over or round the stockade, and their action finally turned the scale. The Turkish attacks began to weaken and then finally about midnight the Turkish infantry withdrew.

"About 2.30 a.m., however, they returned to the assault once again, but the Pioneers were not to be dislodged, and this time the Turks gave up the contest

* These two paragraphs are from the official "Mesopotamia Campaign," Vol. II, page 180.

کوتاه، دیوار، ماسه



« فورت کوتاه »

ATTACK ON THE FORT, KUT-AL-AMARA, 24th December, 1915.

From the Turkish point of view.

altogether and the remainder of the night passed quietly. Thus Christmas Day dawned on a definite Turkish repulse, and, as it turned out, on their last serious attempt to take Kut by assault."

At 3 a.m. the Norfolk took over the defence of the stockade from the 48th Pioneers.

The 52nd Turkish Division, which had made this resolute and dashing attack, suffered at least two thousand casualties, whilst the defenders had 315. The 48th Pioneers lost 5 killed and Captain C. W. Neumann and 20 men wounded.

The remainder of 1915 passed comparatively quietly in Kut. The 48th carried on with their usual night work on the defences, during which they had occasional casualties. Everyone in Kut was confident that they would soon be relieved, so the garrison was still on full rations. The men were fit and in good spirits.

We must now leave the 48th Pioneers for a time, bottled-up with General Townshend and the 6th (Poona) Division in Kut-al-Amara, and turn to the 107th and 128th Pioneers with the relieving force.

CHAPTER XI

1915—1916

“ TIGRIS, 1916 ”

WHEN the 6th (Poona) Division marched into Kut on the 3rd December, 1915, the few other troops in the country were widely distributed as garrisons on the lines of communication on the Tigris, the Euphrates and the Karun rivers, so no relief operations could be started until the arrival of reinforcements. The two Indian Divisions in France had already been detailed to proceed to Mesopotamia, but the intention of their spending some time in Egypt to reorganize had to be cancelled. Units were despatched to Mesopotamia as fast as shipping could be provided and arrived at Basra piecemeal and in no regular order, so that some Brigades had to be organized as battalions happened to arrive at the front.

Major S. B. Watson.
 „ H. W. Ashburner.
 Capt. A. T. Sheringham, D.S.O.
 „ W. B. P. Tugwell.
 „ W. B. MacLeod.
 „ S. G. C. Murray.
 „ E. B. Mangin, M.C.
 „ R. H. H. Manners.
 „ E. H. Chapman.
 Lieut. F. H. F. Hornor, M.C.
 „ B. H. Wallis, M.C., Adjt.
 „ E. W. Geidt.
 Capt. A. C. McCrea, I.M.S.
 Subadar-Major Labh Singh,
 24 Indian Officers, 833 R. and F.,
 and 40 Followers.

Composition :—

A Coy. Sikhs and Jats.
 B „ Rajputana Mussalmans.
 C „ Mahrattas and Pathans.
 D „ Hazaras.

The first few battalions reached Basra on the 2nd December, and on the 4th the 107th Pioneers arrived. On disembarking, the rifles they had received on arrival in France were exchanged for the older pattern with which they had left India, but the machine gun officer, Capt. Mangin, managed to retain the 4 guns brought from France, as he found that they

worked satisfactorily with both "Marks" of ammunition.

One of the many difficulties was to get the constantly arriving troops up the river, owing to the shortage of suitable steamers, so it was decided to construct a track up the right bank of the river to enable troops to march from Basra to Amara. The 107th Pioneers and the 12th Company Sappers and Miners were detailed to make this track, and the battalion headquarters and two companies of the Pioneers started work on bridging the Euphrates at Gurmat Ali on the day after their disembarkation at Basra, having been transported to Gurmat Ali in a river steamer. The other two companies left Basra a few days later and proceeded higher up the Tigris, each company being given a long stretch of track to construct. Eleven channels, varying in width from fifty to six hundred feet, and numerous smaller water-courses, were bridged with the scanty material available, and troops and transport began to march from Basra up this track on the 14th December. The Battalion was complimented by the Corps Commander for "the spirit and energy" it had displayed on this work.

The 107th were concentrated in camp about 10 miles above Qurna by the 20th and then marched for Amara, where they arrived on the 28th December. Their baggage was moved up the meandering Tigris in "mahailas," towed by parties of the men, whilst the main body of the regiment marched by the much shorter way of the track. Precautions had to be taken on this march, such as making perimeter camps, as the local Arabs were excited by the siege of Kut, but they gave no trouble below Amara. After spending two nights at Amara, the 107th embarked on a river steamer and on the 31st December, 1915, arrived at Ali Gharbi, where the force for the relief of Kut was assembling, under the command of Lieut.-General Sir F. J. Aylmer, V.C.

128th had left Suez* on the 11th December in the s.s. "Thongwa," had reached Basra on Christmas Day, and two days later had started up the river in the paddle-steamer "Mosul" and in two "mahailas" lashed to it. Thus three of our battalions were now in Mesopotamia—the 48th besieged in Kut, and the 107th and 128th with the relieving force.

By the 3rd January, 1916, sixteen battalions of infantry, five cavalry regiments and forty-two guns were concentrated at Ali Gharbi. These had been

Composition :—

A Coy.	Sikhs and Pathans.
B „	Mahrattas and Rajputana Mussalmans.
C „	Mahrattas and R.M.s.
D „	Sikhs and Pathans.

Joined at Basra from Dépôt :—

Lieut. C. A. G. Rundle.
2nd Lt. E. H. Gill.
1 I.O. and 64 R. and F.

hastily organized into the 6th Cavalry Brigade, the 7th Division and a collection of units under Corps command, including two old aeroplanes. Transport and medical units were much below requirements. The 107th Pioneers were placed in the 9th (Provisional) Brigade, which was directly under corps headquarters, and the 128th Pioneers were divided between the 28th and the 35th Brigades, both of which were in the 7th Division, commanded by Maj.-General Sir G. J. Younghusband. Units to form the 3rd Division were meanwhile arriving at Basra, but as General Aylmer had been erroneously informed that for lack of food Kut could not hold out much longer, he was forced to advance at once without waiting for more troops.

* The previous services of the 128th Pioneers in Egypt are given in Chapter XIII.

The general idea of the situation, at any rate amongst the regimental officers and men, was that the 6th Division had halted at Kut till the reinforcements could join it, and that some Arab cavalry and a few rather indifferent Turkish infantry had got downstream of it, thus cutting its communications. It was imagined that any opposition would be easily brushed aside and that the Force would march into Kut within a few days. As an officer of the Leicestershire was heard to tell his men, it was expected that "this show would be a mere 'cake-walk' after France."

The country between Ali Gharbi and Kut is a bare and absolutely flat plain, the surface is dusty in the dry season but after rain becomes a quagmire, difficult for transport to move over. There is not a tree to be seen in the district, except just around Kut, and the only vegetation is some grasses in the spring—one sort of which was found to be edible—and in places some camel-thorn. Through this plain runs the river Tigris, from four to five hundred yards wide. The river rises to the very tops of its banks in the rains and often overflows, flooding large areas. In strong wind its surface becomes rough, with waves running high enough to swamp or break a pontoon bridge. Of the several marshes in this area, the biggest is the Suwaikiya Marsh, stretching North for many miles towards the hills and coming to within about a mile of the river from Hanna to Sannaiyat, thus forming a defile eight miles in length between the river and the marsh. When the wind blows it, the marsh advances, looking like the tide coming in over the sand, and it requires a strong "bund" several feet high to stop it.

The 6th Cavalry Brigade and the 7th Division commenced the advance up both banks of the Tigris on the 4th January, leaving some Corps troops, including the 107th Pioneers, at Ali Gharbi to follow on later. The 28th Brigade, under Brig.-General Kemball, with which were the headquarters and three

companies of the 128th Pioneers, marched on the right bank, with the Cavalry Brigade moving farther from the river on Kemball's left flank. On the left bank marched the 16th Cavalry and the 35th Brigade, under Brig.-Gen. Rice, with which was the remaining company of the 128th. The 19th Brigade followed in reserve behind the 35th. Companies of the 128th Pioneers were with the advanced guards of both these columns. Only slight cavalry skirmishes occurred on this day, and the columns halted eight miles upstream from Ali Gharbi. The next day's march was also accomplished with little incident; a platoon from the company of the 128th with Kemball's advanced guard was detailed to blow up the house of an Arab sheikh who was fighting for the Turks. There was sniping into the bivouacs at night.

The start on the morning of the 6th January was delayed by mist till 9 a.m. On the right bank Kemball's force moved forward in two columns, No. 4 company of the 128th being with the advanced guard of the column nearest to the river bank, No. 1 company and the m.g.s. were escort to the 9th Field Artillery Brigade, and No. 2 company stayed behind to level a landing-ground for aeroplanes, and later came on as rear guard to the transport. After driving off some Arabs, at 10.30 a.m., Kemball's advance guard came under fire from a line of enemy trenches some three miles below Shaikh Saad. The 56th Rifles and No. 4 company of the 128th Pioneers were ordered to advance with their right on the river bank and to push in their attack as soon as an attack by the main body against the trenches farther from the river developed. This attack having started, the 56th and No. 4 company of the Pioneers under Major Forbes, advanced by short rushes across the flat plain till they got to within 300 yards of the enemy, by which time the whole attacking line had been held up, and it was evident that they were up against serious opposition. Orders were then received to take up battle outposts for the night and the troops dug



A HAVILDAR
OF THE 28TH (PIONEER) REGIMENT OF BOMBAY INFANTRY.
1898.

themselves in. In this action No. 4 company of the 128th Pioneers lost 3 men killed and 17 wounded.

No. 1 company, acting as escort to the 9th Brigade, R.F.A., had been under occasional shell fire and long range rifle fire, but had suffered no casualties. On the other (left) bank of the river the 35th Brigade, with which was No. 3 company of the 128th, had also been held up by fire from a line of trenches and had been ordered to take up battle outposts for the night about 800 yards from the enemy.

General Younghusband was now ordered to postpone further attack by the 7th Division until General Aylmer joined him next morning. The Corps troops left at Ali Gharbi had started up both banks of the Tigris on the morning of the 6th January, the 107th Pioneers being with the 9th Brigade on the right bank, under Brig.-General Harvey, and the 21st Brigade on the other bank. The transport allotted to the regiment for this march consisted of pack mules, A.T. carts, limbered wagons and camels. These camels were in droves of ten camels to one Arab driver, and, having no leading strings, were almost uncontrollable and caused much trouble in loading. The Jats of the battalion, however, at last got them going. The Brigade marched two miles beyond the camping ground, marched back to it, and finally bivouacked after dark. Half the 107th were on outpost duty, and all spent an uncomfortable night in the rain. The next morning (the 7th) the march was resumed, companies of the 107th providing the advanced, rear, and left flank guards to the Brigade.

On the night of the 6th/7th, the 128th Pioneers were distributed as follows:—No. 4 company in the front trenches of the 28th Brigade near the right bank of the river, No. 3 company with the 35th Brigade on the left bank, and the other two companies on outpost around the main bivouac on the right bank. During this night the Sappers and Miners had started to erect a pontoon bridge across the river, and early on the 7th a party from the 128th Pioneers were sent to make

approach ramps for the bridge, whilst other parties dug trenches near the transport bivouac.

At about 10 a.m. General Aylmer issued his orders for an attack to commence at noon, and at 11 a.m. the troops from Ali Gharbi arrived near the bridge, within easy range of the enemy's guns. The 107th Pioneers put out piquets to cover the parked transport.

On the left bank General Younghusband's force, consisting of the 19th, 21st and 35th Brigades, commenced their attack at noon. No. 3 Company (Major Kriekenbeek) of the 128th were with the 35th Brigade, which attacked the portion of the enemy's line nearest to the river, in front of which they had been entrenched throughout the night. Shortly afterwards the 28th Brigade attacked on the right bank, No. 4 Company of the 128th going into the action in support of the 56th Rifles, close to the river. This attack went well, and after having been temporarily held up, the troops rushed forward and carried the enemy's trenches in great style. Some 600 prisoners and two guns were captured, and the Turks left 300 dead in and around their trenches. This attack was watched by the 107th Pioneers, who had the satisfaction of seeing the prisoners pass by them. On the left bank, however, things had not been going well.

At 12.5 p.m. the headquarters, 4 machine guns and two companies (No. 1 Coy., Major Barratt, and No. 2 Coy., Capt. Goodfellow) of the 128th Pioneers had received orders to cross the bridge and come under General Younghusband's orders. The bridge was not completed till 1.15 p.m., when this half battalion at once crossed to the left bank, where they received orders to "follow up the attack being made by the 19th, 21st and 35th Brigades and to attach themselves to the 21st Brigade." As the 21st Brigade had had more than two miles start, its locality could be only vaguely indicated, but it was hoped that as the Pioneers approached nearer to the fight, they would be able to get into touch with the Brigade Headquarters. Col. Creagh accordingly led his half battalion off into

the desert. They soon began to come under shell fire, and one of their first casualties was the only charger so far issued to the regiment, wounded by shrapnel bullets.

As the Pioneers advanced in column of route they could see, now and then, what appeared to be scattered palm trees appearing and disappearing in a pool of water about half a mile ahead. It was not until some of these objects emerged from the mirage that they could be recognized as orderlies or walking wounded. Instructions had been issued that any wounded man, unable to walk back to a first aid post, was to be placed under any available cover (actually there was none) with his rifle with fixed bayonet stuck in the ground, butt uppermost, as an indication for the stretcher bearers. The many rifles thus stuck in the ground made a curious sight.

After marching for a time, the troops in front could be observed, though distorted by the mirage, and they all appeared to be merged into the fight. Wounded and other individuals met could give no information as to the position of the 21st Brigade. Suddenly the Pioneers came under heavy machine gun and rifle fire from their front and obliquely from their left, shell fire also increased, and their casualties became numerous, the ground being devoid of cover and as flat as a billiard table. Still pushing on, these two companies found themselves in the firing line, between and partly mixed up with the Buffs and Black Watch. They had stumbled on a small gap between the 35th Brigade and part* of the 21st Brigade. Here they joined in the fire fight at a range estimated at 600 yards. It was difficult to locate any targets, but the bursting of our own shells was taken to indicate the line of hostile trenches, and occasionally a Turk was seen to get up and run, as if moving from one trench to another. The half battalion managed to

* The 21st Bde. was fighting in two portions, one on either side of the 19th Bde., which was repulsing a counter-attack against our right flank. The half Battn. 128th did not join up with its coy. with 35th Bde., as stated in some accounts.

work forward some further distance towards the enemy, but Colonel Creagh, seeing that the whole line was held up and that he had only some 150 men left, then ordered his companies to dig in, which they did under very heavy fire, their Pioneer equipment enabling them to get under cover quickly. Colonel Creagh had been wounded, but managed to carry on, and this half battalion of the 128th had lost 26 men killed, 5 missing believed killed, and 2nd Lt. E. H. Gill, Subadar Khushal Khan, Jemadar Syad Hassan and 199 men wounded. The other two companies had no casualties on the 7th.

During the night the trenches were improved, and water, food and ammunition were got up to the front line and the wounded removed to the river bank, the carrying parties having much difficulty in finding their way in the dark across the featureless desert. By the morning all the troops were very tired and the two forces remained facing each other throughout the 8th, without much incident.

We must now return to the 107th Pioneers, who had arrived near the bridge on the right bank at 11 a.m. on the 7th. At 2 p.m. they crossed the bridge with the 9th Brigade to the left bank and then at once advanced northwards for three miles as a reserve behind the right flank of our line engaged with the enemy, but they were not put into the fight. The Brigade remained out until dusk, when they were withdrawn to the river bank, where the Pioneers provided piquets around the transport and field ambulances of the 7th Division and a large number of British and Indian wounded came straggling into the battalion's bivouac in the dark. At midnight the piquets were withdrawn, and the 107th Pioneers formed up with the 9th Brigade at 2.30 a.m. on the left bank of the river, three miles down-stream from the bridge. After a long and cold wait, the Brigade marched in the dark at 4.30 a.m. some seven miles down the river bank to attack an imaginary force of Turks, which was supposed to be trying to cut our

communications. The Brigade halted from 7 a.m. until 9 a.m. on the 8th, when, no enemy having been observed, it returned to near the bridge. After a fifteen minutes rest, the 9th Brigade advanced in extended formation four miles to the North, where the 1/4th Hampshire and the 107th Pioneers entrenched themselves in a position to guard against a possible attack round the right flank of the 7th Division and were ordered to occupy this line for the night. Whilst digging the Pioneers came under enfilade shrapnel fire for a short time, but though the Turkish gunners had got the correct range, the direction was a few yards wrong and no one was hit. The Pioneers had just completed these trenches and were settling into them for the night, when at dusk orders were received to extend the line to the right, that is eastwards, and so the 107th dug trenches again till midnight, after which they spent a cold and wet night in these trenches.

During the morning of the 9th it was found that the Turks had retreated from their trenches, and the 7th Division advanced and occupied Shaikh Saad. The half battalion 128th had been withdrawn from the trenches during the night of the 8th/9th to the river bank, and by about 2 p.m. on the 9th the 107th, with the 9th Brigade, were also assembled there. On the evening of the 10th the 9th Brigade marched to Shaikh Saad, leaving Colonel Creagh with the half battalion of the 128th and one company of the 107th, and a few details to guard the bivouac where some 950 British, 1,200 Indian and 70 Turkish wounded had been collected. The Field Ambulances having proved insufficient to deal with all* the casualties properly, these wounded had a rough time lying out in the open in the wet and cold. The Pioneers did what they could to help them, and provided a great number with food, until the last of the wounded were evacuated down stream in river

* Our total casualties at Shaikh Saad were 4,007, of whom 417 were killed.

craft on the 13th January. Colonel Creagh's party then started to catch up with the 7th Division.

On the 11th January the Turks were found to be entrenching along the far bank of the Wadi, a stream which runs into the Tigris some $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles downstream of the entrance to the narrow Hanna defile, formed by the marsh and the Tigris. On the night of the 12th/13th, the 7th Division made a night march so as to cross the Wadi high up beyond the left flank of this position, with the intention of moving next morning down behind the Turks to cut off their retreat to the Hanna defile, and the 28th Brigade took over the line facing the trenches along the Wadi. The two companies of the 128th Pioneers, which had been with the 28th and 35th Brigades respectively, were formed into a half battalion under Major Kriekenbeek as divisional Pioneers for this operation. The 7th Division commenced its night march northwards at 9.45 p.m. on the 12th, and by 2.30 a.m. on the 13th were formed up ready to cross the Wadi as soon as it was light enough. No enemy opposition was encountered, and by 10 a.m. the three infantry brigades had forded the Wadi, but its steep banks were a serious obstacle for the artillery, and in spite of strenuous work at top speed in making ramps by the two companies of the 128th, all the guns were not across till nearly 1 p.m., and the transport had not finished crossing at dusk; it was unfortunate that the whole battalion of Pioneers was not with the Division.

The Division then moved towards the river to get behind the Turks, but were held up by the enemy, who had hastily occupied the line of a water-cut, which ran back almost at right-angles to the Wadi. The determination with which these Turks held off this threat against the flank of the Wadi position saved their army from what promised to be a serious defeat. At dusk the 7th Division was still two miles from the river, in which position they remained through the night. The two companies of the 128th stayed near

the crossing places over the Wadi, and were not involved in the fighting.

Early that morning (13th) the 28th Brigade had driven back the covering parties of the Turks in the vicinity of Chitab's Fort to their main position along the Wadi. The 9th Brigade, with which were three companies of the 107th Pioneers, were held back in reserve till late in the afternoon, when they moved forward and arrived near Chitab's Fort soon after dark. There was some confusion in the dark, the Brigade marching through one of our heavy batteries in action, to the heartily expressed indignation of the gunners, and the first line transport and the ammunition columns crossing each other. An outpost line was taken up in the dark, the 107th being on the right, farthest from the river. The 28th Brigade were meanwhile assaulting the front of the Wadi position, but were repulsed with heavy losses. A few men of the 107th holding the outpost line were hit by "overs" during the attack, but the remainder of the night was very quiet, and cold.

Before dawn on the 14th the 107th Pioneers were ordered to be ready to attack the Wadi position with the 9th Brigade. The men were issued with ammunition to complete to 200 rounds per man, and there was difficulty in carrying this, as it was issued in packets instead of in web bandoliers as in France, and the men's haversacks were already full of food and the pockets of their coats were too small to hold the ammunition. The advance had no sooner started at 7.30 a.m. than news was received that the Turks had slipped away during the night into the Hanna defile. The 107th then cleared the battlefield, burying many dead of the 28th Brigade and collecting a few wounded, and by the evening the battalion bivouacked near the mouth of the Wadi. Here they were rejoined by the company which had remained behind with Colonel Creagh's detachment. The 128th also again became a complete battalion, and spent the night of the 14th/15th in helping the transport of the 7th

Division across the Wadi. Rain now fell heavily and the Wadi became unfordable. The 107th erected a trestle bridge across this stream, but a roaring spate came down and broke up the bridge. They then assisted the Sappers in putting two pontoon bridges across the Wadi, over which some heavy guns passed, although the pontoons almost sank under them.

A pair of mules, drawing a cart load of the Pioneers' blankets, shied whilst crossing this bridge, fell into the Wadi with the cart and disappeared beneath the swirling water.

The relief force now halted for a few days opposite the Hanna position, the advanced base being near the mouth of the Wadi. There were two possible lines of advance towards Kut, one through the Hanna defile between the marsh and the Tigris, and the other, after crossing to the right bank, straight across country to Kut. As river transport could not proceed farther up the Tigris, whilst the Turks held the Hanna position, the latter move would have entailed the use of only land transport. The storm of wind, accompanying the rain, swamped the bridge of boats which the Sappers and Miners had with much difficulty put across the Tigris and washed some of the bridging material down stream, and at the same time the mud made movement across country very difficult. The bulk of the relief force thus found itself on the left bank, with no immediate route open except through the defile. It was still thought that there was no time to wait for the weather to clear up, for a bridge to be got across the river or for the advance to be more deliberately organized.

Some further troops and staffs now arrived and the Tigris Corps was reorganized into the 3rd and 7th Divisions and Corps Troops. The 107th Pioneers remained as an infantry battalion of the 9th Brigade, now in the 3rd Division, and the 128th Pioneers became the divisional Pioneers of the 7th Division.

9th Brigade.

1st Connaughts.

1/4th Hampshires.

62nd Punjabis.

107th Pioneers.

The Turkish position at Hanna stretched for only three-quarters of a mile between the marsh and the river. It was bombarded throughout the 20th January in preparation for the attack next day. Some guns and one brigade of the 3rd Division had been ferried across the Tigris, so as to bring flanking fire against the Turks, but the 9th and 28th Brigades stayed on the left bank, the 9th being attached to the 7th Division and the 28th being Corps reserve. During the night of the 20th/21st the infantry of the 7th Division managed to get forward so that their front line was about 300 yards from the Turkish trenches. The 9th Brigade left their bivouac at 3 a.m. on the 21st January and took up their position behind the left of the 7th Division, near the river bank. The 107th were the rear battalion in the brigade, and dug themselves three lines of assembly trenches. A little behind the 9th Brigade, near the Headquarters of the 7th Division, were the 128th Pioneers in divisional reserve.

Our guns opened fire at 7.45 a.m. on the 21st; the bombardment was heavy compared with previous battles in Mesopotamia, but not so good as those the 7th Division had been supported by in France, and the fire appeared to be remarkably inaccurate. When the infantry of the 7th Division assaulted they were met by a well directed and rapid musketry fire, which swept over the flat ground inflicting severe casualties, and only a small party of the Black Watch, with a few men of the 9th Jats, the 97th Infantry and the Dogras managed to reach and capture a short length of the enemy front line. The 9th Brigade moved forward to support this attack, but its three leading battalions suffered very heavy losses and could not get home, though it is believed that a few of the 1/4th Hampshire reached the enemy trenches. The 107th Pioneers advanced a short way in support and occupied the pits and shallow trenches vacated by the Connaughts. The Battalion's machine guns, under Captain Mangin, had been in action near the river bank since daylight,

giving covering fire to the attack. These machine guns were transported in A.T. carts and extra men had to be detailed to help the carts through the mud and to man-handle the guns and ammunition. A determined Turkish counter-attack bombed the party of the Black Watch and other units out of the captured portion of trench. It must have been galling to these battalions, after their experiences in France, to find themselves again unarmed with hand-grenades!

At about midday torrents of rain began to fall, turning the surface of the desert into a morass of deep mud. Three battalions of the 28th Brigade were then sent up to help the right of our line, and a second attack was made at 1 p.m., but was soon defeated by the combined effect of bullets and mud. General Younghusband then decided to discontinue the attack and ordered his forward troops to withdraw as soon as it was dusk. During this day the casualties of the 107th Pioneers had been only 4 men killed and Lieut. Geidt and 10 men wounded. Geidt was hit whilst acting as liaison officer with the 9th Brigade H.Q. The 128th Pioneers, who had been the divisional reserve throughout the day, had no casualties.

It appears that General Aylmer intended that one more effort to carry the Hanna position should be made by the four battalions on the left bank not yet put into the assault, viz. the 2nd Leicestershire, 56th Rifles, 107th Pioneers and 128th Pioneers, but his orders to this effect did not reach General Young-husband in time, owing to defective communications.

At 5 p.m. the 107th advanced to about 950 yards from the Turks and entrenched themselves in two lines on a front of about 400 yards to cover the withdrawal of the remnants of the battalions in their front, this position being taken up just as it was getting dark. On their left were the Connaught Rangers and echeloned back from their right were the Leicestershire. During the terribly cold and wet night, the regiment assisted in collecting wounded, which was exhausting work owing to the darkness,



SUB-MAJ SURJA,
BAHADUR
(Jat).



SUB. SHER AFZAL,
M.C., I.D.S.M.
(Pathan).



*Photo :
Elliott & Fry*



SUB.-MAJ. AND HON. LIEUT. KRISHNA
BOSLE, SIRDAR BAHADUR, I.D.S.M.
(Mahratta).



SUB.-MAJ. AND HON. CAPT. RAHIM
KHAN, BAHADUR
(Rajputana Mussalman).

(Centre) SUB.-MAJ. AND HON. CAPT. LABH SINGH,
SIRDAR BAHADUR, I.D.S.M. (Sikh).

rain, wind and gluey mud. Lieut. Wallis, with a few Pathans, made a close reconnaissance of the enemy line during the night and found that there was no sign of them vacating their position, as they had done at Sheikh Saad and the Wadi. At dawn many of the men were found to be numb with the cold and a few of the Connaughts actually died from its effect. The waterproof capes taken from the men on leaving France were much missed.

As soon as it was light, Turks were seen drying their clothes and repairing their parapets, and a number of them were wandering over the battlefield, stripping the dead and collecting rifles, a few shots however sent them to cover. Later on in the morning the 107th were surprised to see crowds of Turks emerge from their trenches in a leisurely manner, and the machine guns were about to be turned on them, when it was noticed that someone was riding towards them with a white flag, but a good time elapsed before the regiment was informed that a truce had been arranged. Parties of our men were sent out to look for wounded, bury dead, and collect equipment, and one of these parties almost came to blows with some Turks about some rifles. A dapper French-speaking Turkish officer, with a few men, visited the 107th in their trench and was given a stiff glass of rum, which he drank off at a gulp, to the horror of our Mussalman sepoys. Major Ashburner walked back with this officer, and was taken over several lines of their trenches to their local Headquarters, where he had a conversation with a Turkish General. On taking his leave, he was told that as he had come through their lines unblindfolded, he would have to be retained, but Ashburner, in a joking manner, managed to persuade them to let him go. He was then blindfolded and led as far as no man's land and returned safely.

After the truce was over, long range sniping was indulged in by both sides and there were a few encounters between patrols at night, the 107th having

six men wounded. They remained in the front line until the evening of the 24th January, when they were relieved by the 1st Manchesters and returned to the camp near the Wadi. During this period the 128th had been working at night on digging communication trenches and by day on road making and other work about the camp. They had six men wounded on night work, and Captain Goodfellow was also slightly wounded.

Soon after this defeat at Hanna, General Townshend reported that by using grain found in the town and by eating his horses and mules, Kut could hold out for a further 84 days. So all the costly hurry had really been unnecessary! The conditions for the troops of the relieving force now began to improve, the weather got better and a bridge was established across the Tigris. Up to this time conditions had been excessively trying, and the sepoy's regretted having left the comparative comforts of France, where they at least got good food, shelter when out of the trenches, and the wounded received proper treatment. What the Tommies thought of it can be judged by a remark one made, when passing, to a sepoy:—"Boy," he said, quite cheerily, "Kuch nay khana, kuch nay cigarettes, kuch nay madamoselle, sab napoo; comprez?"

Another shuffle of units now occurred, the 107th leaving the 9th Brigade to resume its place as the divisional Pioneers of the 7th Division, and the 128th shifting to the 3rd Division, but remaining on the left bank on loan to the 7th Division. These two* Pioneer battalions then worked every night on strengthening the trench system facing the Turks at Hanna, during which both battalions had occasional casualties, including Subadar Hari Singh, of the 107th, severely wounded. On the 18th February the 128th Pioneers crossed the bridge to join the 3rd Division

* Strength on 27th January, 1916.

107th Pioneers,	11 B.O.s,	13 I.O.s	and 581 R. and F.
128	„	11 „	13 „ „ 578 „

	<i>7th Brigade.</i>	
1st Connaught	Rangers.	on the right bank, but as the
27th Punjabis.		34th Sikh Pioneers had meanwhile
89th Punjabis.		arrived from France and become
128th Pioneers.		the divisional Pioneers of their old
		Division, the 128th were posted

as an infantry battalion to the 7th Brigade.

With the 34th Sikh Pioneers there came to Mesopotamia a Sikh company of the 12th (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Pioneers, which had been with them in France for over a year. As the 34th received large reinforcements from India at the Wadi camp, this company of the 12th Pioneers was detached from the 34th Sikh Pioneers and became an independent company under Major R. J. Cuming and was allotted to Corps Troops. It worked with the Sappers and Miners on the trenches and communications before Hanna.

General Aylmer had decided that the next serious thrust should be on the right bank, but meanwhile in order to gain ground on the right bank, and also to deceive the enemy, he ordered a feint attack to be made against Hanna, and he was not without hope that this might induce the Turks to evacuate that position. Accordingly just before dusk on the 21st February, a strange procession consisting of a few troops, a crowd of followers, and some carts loaded with baulks masquerading as guns, made a pretence of crossing the marsh to threaten the left flank of the Hanna position; later, at 9 p.m., our guns bombarded the hostile trenches and coloured rockets were sent

107th Pioneers. Joined in Feb., Lt. A. W. Slater, 2nd Lts. R. E. F. S. Bampton and L. F. McC. Murphy; in April, Capt. J. Sterndale-Bennett, Lt. H. E. Robertson, 2nd Lt. J. Borlase.

128th Pioneers. Joined in April, Capt. G. B. Turner, 2nd Lts. E. H. Pascoe and W. A. Lovat Fraser, also Capt. N. C. Kapur, I.M.S., and Lt. M. B. Yin, I.M.S.

Capt. A. Pulverman, 128th Pioneers, was in command of No. 10 Indian Divisional Signal Company.

Drafts of Indian Officers and R. and F. joined both battalions at various times.

up, which drew a continuous rifle and machine gun fire from the enemy for an hour. The next morning a column, including the 128th Pioneers, moved up the right bank of the Tigris to the vicinity of the Senna canal, whence our guns bombarded the Turkish camp across the river, causing some confusion. At 3.30 p.m. a portion of this column pushed farther up the river bank to near Sannaiyat, well behind the Hanna position, taking with them dummy pontoons on carts, to give the impression that an attempt was to be made to cross the river behind the Turks. A company of the 128th and a Sapper company escorted these dummy pontoons. They returned after dusk, with seven prisoners, apparently having caused some alarm amongst the enemy, but the Turk refused to be bluffed into evacuating Hanna. An enemy aeroplane dropped bombs on this column, some falling close to the Pioneers, but causing no damage. During the following few days the 128th were employed in sinking wells in the Abu Romman position, digging a covered way to the river for the transport animals to water, and on other engineering work.

The next move of the relieving force was the attack on the main Es Sinn position on the right bank, with the intention of turning the flank of this position by seizing the Dujaila redoubt and following this up by capturing the whole line and then pressing forward to Kut. A small force, including the 107th Pioneers, was to contain the enemy in his Hanna position on the left bank, whilst the bulk of the Tigris Corps was concentrated on the right bank for the main operation. The 13th Division from Egypt was at this time commencing to arrive at Basra, but it was considered that the operation could not be delayed till this British division arrived, owing to the imminence of the flood season.

The attacking force assembled after dusk on the 7th March near the Pools of Siloam, ready for the night march. The 128th Pioneers had been working all that day on improving and marking the routes to

this rendezvous, and at 8.30 p.m. the battalion arrived there with the 7th Brigade, which was in the 3rd or rearmost Group, under General Keary. The 128th received instructions that at the position of deployment they would leave the 7th Brigade to assist the artillery in making their gun-pits and then be in reserve, but they were later ordered to remain with their Brigade. The successful night march of some six infantry brigades, with artillery, cavalry and transport, from the rendezvous to the position of deployment commenced at 10.10 p.m., the 7th Brigade marching in line of half battalions in fours, the 128th being on the left of this line and providing a left flank guard. After many hours of marching in the dark, the 7th Brigade arrived at the position of deployment at 5.10 a.m. and shortly afterwards moved in a westerly direction with orders to take up a position about 1,400 yards from the Dujaila redoubt, to be ready to assist with their fire an attack which was to be made on the redoubt from the South by General Kembell's column. The 128th were still the left battalion of the brigade, but with the brigade machine guns moving on their left. Exclusive of machine gunners, signallers, men detailed to ammunition columns, transport guards and other jobs, the rifle strength of the 128th, which included a recently trained "bomb squad," was now only about 200, so these were organized as two companies, the spare company commanders being left with the regimental ammunition reserve, to replace casualties if necessary.

At 7 a.m. the 7th Brigade started to entrench themselves at what they thought was 1,400 yards from the Dujaila redoubt, but it was later seen that an intervening ridge had been mistaken for the redoubt. At about the same time the Corps artillery opened fire, and, as became known afterwards, this wakened up the Turks, who had received no other intimation of the approach of the attacking force. The attack of General Kembell's column, delayed for various reasons, did not develop until about

9.30 a.m., and so missed the opportunity of completely surprising the enemy, and after severe fighting it was held up by enemy occupying trenches in front of the redoubt. At midday the 128th Pioneers and the 27th Punjabis advanced to the ridge intervening between the 7th Brigade and the Dujaila redoubt, whence they fired on the redoubt at a range of 1,100 yards and could see some of Kemball's troops, who appeared to be withdrawing. The ridge was under rifle and shrapnel fire, from which the 128th had thirteen men wounded. General Aylmer ordered the 8th and 35th Brigades of General Keary's Group to assault the Dujaila redoubt and General Kemball to renew his attack, but the 7th Brigade to be kept in hand to deal with any attempt of the enemy to cut him off from his base at the Wadi. At 4 p.m., just before this assault went forward, the 128th, and the other units of the 7th Brigade, were withdrawn from the ridge to a reserve position farther back. Keary's two brigades carried out their assault with great dash and entered the Dujaila redoubt, but their supply of grenades becoming exhausted, they were bombed out of it by a counter attack made by Turkish troops who had been ferried across from the left bank of the Tigris. The attack on the Es Sinn position had thus definitely failed, and General Aylmer ordered all his force to concentrate for the night in the vicinity of his Corps artillery.

The 128th spent the night of the 8th/9th in entrenching a line 700 yards long, and in the morning half the battalion took up an outpost line, whilst the other half collected rifles and equipment strewn about around the dressing stations. The force commenced the retirement at midday, the enemy following up half-heartedly, and occasionally shelling the columns, and by midnight the force had crossed the bridge to the Wadi camp, with the exception of the 7th Brigade, which occupied the Senna position on the right bank.

Whilst the operation against the Dujaila redoubt was in progress, the 7th Division on the other

bank had kept the Turks at Hanna apprehensive of an attack. On the evening of the 7th March, when the troops on the right bank were concentrating for the night march, two companies of the 107th Pioneers formed part of a column from the 7th Division, which made a demonstration to the north as if threatening the left flank of the Hanna position. This column, after getting well bogged in the marsh, returned soon after dark. On the next day some of the 107th were at work on the front line, when our guns and rifles opened a heavy fire on the Hanna position, and the enemy replied with a feeble artillery, but heavy rifle fire. The 7th Division having been ordered to send one battalion across to the right bank to assist in covering the retirement from the Dujaila redoubt, the 107th Pioneers crossed the bridge at 5.30 a.m. on the 9th and held a front of 1,500 yards at Senna. One company of the 6th Bn. Royal Lancaster Regt. was attached to the 107th for the day, this company being the first unit of the 13th Division to reach the front. The 107th and this company held the Senna position throughout the day, under occasional shell fire from Hanna, whilst the retreating force, in good order though obviously exhausted and suffering from thirst, with long columns of springless A.T. carts carrying the wounded, passed through them, until at 9 p.m. the 107th were relieved by the 128th Pioneers and the rest of the 7th Brigade. Soon after midnight the 107th were back again on the left bank.

After the Dujaila reverse Lt.-General Sir G. F. Goringe superseded General Aylmer in command of the Tigris Corps. The floods were now becoming very troublesome, and the river, rising higher than most of the surrounding country, was only partially kept to its channel by means of bunds, the building and upkeep of which required much labour. On the 27th March Lt.-Colonel Stevens rejoined the 107th from sick leave and resumed the command from Major Watson.

Our trench system on the left bank facing Hanna

was being advanced nearer to the enemy line by sapping, the units working on this being the Sapper and Miner Companies, the one company of the 12th Pioneers and the 107th Pioneers, and later also the R.E. companies and the 8th Royal Welch Regt. (Pioneers) of the 13th Division. The 34th Sikh Pioneers also helped in this sapping for a few days. The saps were pushed forward for about a hundred yards and then the sap heads were joined up to form a fire trench, after which forward sapping again commenced. The Turks remained remarkably passive during this advance by sapping, and though they caused some casualties by machine gun fire, they refrained from making a single sally against the sap heads. When it was dark enough, the Pioneers often got out of their saps and dug in the open, thus progressing faster. Whether from having more experience or from not being accustomed to work in peace time under Trade Union restrictions, the Indians were surprised to find that they invariably out-sapped the sturdy Welsh miners and labourers of the 13th Division. This sapping forward had commenced in February and continued by day and night till the 4th April, by which time our front line was exactly 100 paces from the enemy, representing an advance of 600 yards by sapping.

At dawn on the 5th April the 13th Division rushed across the hundred yards and over the Hanna trenches with very few casualties, as the Turk had retired in the nick of time, leaving only a small detachment to hold these trenches. The 13th Division then pushed on till they came under fire from trenches at Fala-lahiya. They paused until dusk and then captured this position in brilliant style, getting well into the enemy rear guard holding the position. The Turks held on to the last, dropping some 1,800 of their assailants. The 13th Division continued their advance for about half a mile, when they halted for the 7th Division to pass through them to attack the Sannaiyat trenches. This was the most cheering day the relief

force had experienced—a five-mile advance through strong positions in one day. The 3rd Sapper Company and the 107th Pioneers followed up the assault on Hanna, and by 9 a.m. had made three roads over our own and the enemy trenches for the forward movement of guns and wheeled transport. They had also rendered thirty Turkish ground mines harmless, made two other roads for stretcher bearers, repaired the river bunds and searched the river banks for mine connections. They had only a few men wounded by shrapnel.

The 7th Division advanced that night along the edge of the marsh to make a dawn attack on Sannaiyat, a position which closed the exit from the defile between the river and the marsh. Something went wrong with this night advance, for when day dawned on the 6th, the brigades had not completed their deployment and were still about 800 yards from the Turks. A terrible fire was opened on them, cutting them down in crowds and making it impossible to get across that flat ground, unsupported by artillery fire. The survivors lay down and scraped together some sort of cover at about 1,000 yards from the enemy trenches, where they stayed all day and at night dug themselves in. It is doubtful if the Turks can have lost a man. At 2 p.m. the wind had started to blow the water of the marsh towards the river, and there was a fear that the marsh might join up with the river behind the 7th Division. The 107th Pioneers and all other available troops were put on to make a bund. The enemy's guns opened fire on the 107th for a while, but all the shells went over into the marsh. That night the 107th bivouacked about 2 miles East of the Sannaiyat position.

On the next day, the 7th, a peculiar operation was undertaken. The two brigades of the 7th Division in the front line were ordered to advance about 300 yards nearer to the enemy and then to dig themselves in during broad daylight; providing what must have been interesting field-firing practice for the Turks,

they naturally lost heavily. By further efforts at night the front line was advanced to about 600 yards from the enemy, and the 13th Division then came up and delivered an assault just before dawn on the 9th April, which was repulsed. After this Sannaiyat settled down to trench warfare, the Sappers and Pioneers of the 7th Division sapping forward.

A month has elapsed since we left the 128th Pioneers, with the 7th Brigade, holding the Senna position after the retreat from before the Dujaila redoubt on the 9th March. On that afternoon the Turks had occupied the trenches on the right bank about the Abu Rumman mounds, which had been held by the 7th Brigade prior to the Dujaila battle. On the 11th March, General Egerton, commanding the 7th Brigade, after a sharp fight captured the line of Thorny Nala with two of his battalions—the Connaught Rangers and the 89th Punjabis—the 128th being left to hold Senna. At 4.30 p.m. the 128th marched to rejoin their Brigade, and took up a position holding the line along Thorny Nala on the right (or river) flank of the Brigade. In this position there was some sniping across the river, as Thorny Nala is well in rear of the Turkish Hanna position. On the 15th March the 27th Punjabis captured Mason's Mounds, a short distance in front of the Nala.

Large areas on the right bank were now being flooded by the rising river, and the 128th Pioneers were kept hard at work making bunds. As this work was on the river bank, it was in range of the enemy snipers across the river, and at night the Turks could sometimes be heard talking and singing. The Pioneers also did a lot of work on improving the defences at Thorny Nala. On the 28th March the 8th Brigade took over the Thorny Nala position from the 7th Brigade, who went back to a tented camp near Senna.

On the 5th April (the day of the capture of Hanna on the left bank) two brigades of the 3rd Division occupied the Abu Rumman position on the right bank, from which the enemy had withdrawn. The 7th

Brigade marched at 4.15 a.m. from Senna and at 2 p.m. came into line on the left of these two brigades, so that the 3rd Division then held a line stretching some four miles from the Tigris southwards towards the Umm al Baram marsh. During this advance the 128th Pioneers acted as a covering screen to the 7th Brigade until it had taken up this position in the line, when the battalion was withdrawn into brigade reserve. The 128th had just settled down, when at 3.30 p.m. Turkish cavalry and artillery drove in the two squadrons covering the left of the 7th Brigade. General Egerton ordered the 128th Pioneers to meet the situation, and the Pioneers at once deployed and advanced steadily under hostile shell fire to attack the enemy cavalry. The 2nd Gurkhas were sent up to assist and followed behind the left flank of the 128th.

The Turkish cavalry fell back, and, after having advanced about $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles, the 128th Pioneers halted. It was then getting dusk, but they could see about a brigade of Turkish infantry some 2,000 yards to the south-west. During this affair the Pioneers had five men wounded. The 128th then withdrew a little and took up a very long outpost line, with the Connaughts on their right and the Gurkhas near the marsh on their left.

Heavy rain now fell and the floods also advanced from the Tigris. Large tracts of country were under water, both in front of and behind the 3rd Division, impeding movement and making it difficult for supplies to be brought up. These floods provided heavy labour for the 128th Pioneers, for as well as holding their portion of the piquet line, they worked by day on diverting the floods. They also marked with pillars the best route for transport to use when coming up through the floods. On the 8th a company of the 128th, under Forbes, made a reconnaissance two miles to the south-west, but only saw a few enemy cavalry piquets. The 128th established two small entrenched piquets 1,000 yards in front of their line.

The second attempt to capture Sannaiyat on the left bank having failed on the 9th April, General Gorringe ordered the 3rd Division to capture the Bait Isa position and he transferred the 13th Division to the right bank to support them. On the evening of the 9th, the 128th Pioneers waded through the floods two miles towards Abu Rumman, to the place where the 7th Brigade was concentrating for the advance.

During the next few days the enemy troops holding piquets and trenches in advance of the main Bait Isa position were driven in, most of the fighting falling to the 7th and 9th Brigades, supported by the 8th and 37th Brigades. Owing to a report that Turks were advancing from the direction of Dujaila, the 128th Pioneers were detached from their Brigade and sent South on the evening of the 13th to hold a long line of piquets near the place marked Triangle on the map, from where enemy piquets could be seen to the south-west. At 6 p.m. on the 16th April the 128th were relieved by the Manchester Regiment, of the 8th Brigade, and marched to rejoin the 7th Brigade at Rohde's Piquet preparatory to the assault on the Bait Isa position next day. They reached Rohde's Piquet at 10 p.m. and lay down till 1.30 a.m., when the Brigade moved forward in the dark to within about 800 yards of the trenches to be assaulted.

At 7 a.m. on the 17th April, the 7th Brigade (with the 9th Brigade on their left) advanced to the assault. The Connaught Rangers and 27th Punjabis led, with the 89th Punjabis and 128th Pioneers following, the Pioneers being deployed in four lines. The leading troops followed very closely behind the artillery barrage, and rushing the enemy trenches before it lifted, got right into the Turks with the bayonet. The enemy were driven out of their Bait Isa position, leaving some 300 dead in their trenches. A number of prisoners and machine guns were captured and the 9th Brigade secured two enemy field guns. Our losses were light, but included Major A. Forbes, 128th



OFFICERS' MESS, THE CORPS OF BOMBAY PIONEERS.
East Kirkee, 1932.

Pioneers, killed whilst leading "D" company. By 7.30 a.m. the assaulting troops of the 7th Brigade fetched up in the westernmost of five dry water channels, about 700 yards behind the captured front line; by then all four companies of the 128th were in the leading line, which ran as follows from the Tigris bank to the left:—1 company Connaught Rangers, "B" and "C" companies 128th, another company of Connaught Rangers, and some of the 89th Punjabis, "A" and "D" companies 128th Pioneers, the 27th Punjabis and other units continuing the line to the left. At 9 a.m. the defence of the captured position was reorganized, the 89th taking over the right of the line along the river bank, the Connaught the centre, and the 27th the left; the 128th were ordered back to No. 1 water channel, about 100 yards in rear, as Brigade reserve. The captured trenches on the left of the 7th Brigade were held by the 9th Brigade, and the line was extended southwards by the 8th Brigade. Behind the 7th Brigade, but separated from them by a deep and wide flood, was the 39th Brigade of the 13th Division. That afternoon the Turks heavily bombarded the 7th Brigade position.

The garrison of Kut was now in such desperate straits from starvation that there was little time left to effect their relief. General Gorrings's intention was that the 13th Division should take over the Bait Isa position from the 3rd Division during that night and push on the next morning to attack the Chahela trenches, but this intention was upset by the Turks, who had decided to change from the defensive tactics they had so far adopted and had massed troops for a great night attack on the right bank.

Soon after dusk, at 7 p.m. on the 17th April, masses of Turks hurled themselves against the 7th and 9th Brigades. Most of the front of the 7th Brigade held firm, but after a few minutes of desperate fighting two Gurkha battalions of the 9th Brigade were swept backwards, carrying with them the left companies of the 27th Punjabis. The 128th Pioneers had been

ordered up to support the Punjabis, but on their way up they were crashed into by the retiring troops of the 9th Brigade, closely followed by and partly mixed up with the advancing hordes of Turks. The Pioneers were carried back with them, considerable confusion ensuing in the dark, until the old Turkish front line of Bait Isa was reached, where the 128th quickly rallied. Hearing that the Connaught Rangers were still holding out in their front line, "A," "C" and "D" companies of the 128th Pioneers advanced to link up with the left of the Connaught, and on reaching that position they successfully withstood the many gallant efforts of the enemy to break through. "B" Company, under Subadar-Major Krishna Bhosle, with Colonel Creagh, who had already been wounded, formed a line facing south to stave off the Turks advancing round the rear. Here Colonel Creagh was again wounded, and this company was subsequently driven back into the old Turkish front line, where they joined some of the 27th Punjabis. The close-quarter fighting was very confused, the air seemed to be full of bullets and sometimes it was difficult to distinguish friend from foe in the moonlight, but eventually the Turkish attack was definitely held up.

At about 2 a.m. General Egerton, who earlier in the night had been personally involved in the fighting, issued orders to consolidate his Brigade in a position where its left flank would be secure, so the Connaughts, one company 27th Punjabis, 89th Punjabis and the three companies 128th Pioneers were withdrawn into the old Turkish front line. On arrival there the 128th Pioneers mustered a fighting strength of 128 men, commanded by Captain Goodfellow.

Major-General H. D'H. Keary, commanding the 3rd Division, recorded that: "As infantry, the 128th Pioneers have shown that they can fight as well as they can work, and their behaviour on the night of the 17th/18th April, at a very critical period, helped most materially to preserve our line intact. Great praise is due to Lt.-Col. Creagh for the gallant and

splendid example he set to all ranks on that memorable occasion."

The casualties of the 128th Pioneers had been :— Killed : Major A. Forbes, Major R. E. E. Kriekenbeek (at first reported as wounded and missing) and 11 Rank and File; missing, Major E. B. Barratt (later reported as died of his wound in a Turkish hospital in Baghdad), and 3 men missing believed killed; wounded, Lt.-Col. A. H. D. Creagh (twice), Capt. C. E. G. B. Goad, 2nd Lieut. and Adjutant H. Birch (who died* of his wounds on a river-steamer before reaching Basra), Capt. N. C. Kapur, I.M.S., and a number of Rank and File.

Further to the south the 8th Brigade had repulsed all the attacks made on them during the night. After the arrival of reinforcements from the 13th Division, the 7th Brigade was withdrawn a little before dawn on the 18th into a reserve position, and thence moved to near Rohde's Piquet, where they remained for some days without much incident.

The Turks left piles of slain, estimated at over 4,000, in front of Bait Isa, amongst which the bodies of a few German officers were noticed. Though their great effort had failed to drive the 3rd Division back into the marshes and river, yet it stayed our advance on this bank.

Hoping that the transfer of Turks from the left bank might have made Sannaiyat less secure, a third attempt was now made to force a way to Kut through that position. The 107th Pioneers and the independent company of the 12th Pioneers had been engaged in sapping towards Sannaiyat, much hampered by the floods. On one occasion the Suwaiqiya marsh had advanced and breaking in waves over the right of our trenches had flooded long lengths of them, fish were caught in the trenches, and men worked naked in bailing out the water.

The attack on Sannaiyat was made on the 22nd

* The 128th did not hear of Harold Birch's death until more than a month afterwards.

April. The whole of no man's land was a sheet of mud and water, the deepness of the flood on part of the front leaving only space for one brigade of the 7th Division to assault, and after floundering through the mire to the enemy's third line, they were driven out by Turkish counter attacks, which came on despite losses inflicted on them by our enfilade fire from the other bank of the river. After this failure, the steamer "Julnar" made a daring attempt to run into Kut with supplies on the night of the 24th, but was stopped and captured by the Turks. Everyone in the force appeared to know that this attempt was to be made, so probably the Turks did too!

The Tigris Corps had been struggling for nearly four months to relieve Kut, they had endured the greatest hardships and suffered over 23,000 battle casualties, and now they were to hear that they had failed.

On the 29th April, 1916, the news was received that Kut had surrendered.

* * * * *

The story of the 48th Pioneers in Kut up to the end of 1915 was given in the last chapter. In January the beleaguered garrison had no doubt that they would soon be relieved, and when, on the 21st, they heard the cheerful sound of Aylmer's guns down stream, they thought their troubles were about to end. Even after the news arrived of the repulse at Hanna, General Townshend* published a statement that he "Confidently expected to be relieved some day during the first half of February."

Heavy rain and the rising river flooded the front line trenches on the 21st January, and the occupants had to retire across the open into another line, suffering a good many casualties from the Turkish fire in doing so. The next day the Turks were also flooded out and the garrison had their revenge. The enemy

* Capt. M. E. S. Johnson, 48th Pioneers, was on the Staff of the 6th Division, and Subadar Lehna Singh was Orderly-Officer to General Townshend throughout the siege.

went back some 1,200 yards, which made the sniping less deadly, and also greatly lessened the likelihood of another attempt to capture Kut by storm. The 48th Pioneers worked every night on the new front line, making the parapet into a strong bund to keep out the water, which had formed a large lake between the hostile lines. There was constant work on making bunds as the river rose.

By February there were still some Arab tobacco and cigarettes to be obtained, but high prices were realised for tobacco at the auctions of deceased officers' kits, for instance, $\frac{1}{2}$ lb. of tobacco went for Rs. 47, and 100 cigarettes for Rs. 100. The garrison had been reduced to three-quarters rations on the 23rd January, and the only meat available was horse and mule. By the end of February the Indian troops were getting practically no rations except coarse barley flour, and although the Sappers and Miners and the Pioneers got a little rice in addition to the barley because of the constant hard labour they had to perform, yet by the end of the month their working capacity was down to half. On the 22nd February General Townshend issued a communiqué asking the Indians to eat horse flesh. Had a definite order been issued it would probably have been obeyed, but General Townshend would not issue such an order. Opinions had been wirelessly from eminent Hindu and Mussalman leaders in India that the eating of horse flesh was permissible under the circumstances, but the sepoys doubted if these opinions would be accepted in their villages, and as it was constantly being impressed on them that they were just about to be relieved, they thought it better to hang out a bit longer, rather than run the risk of being ostracized. After some time, however, Colonel Harward and the company commanders managed to talk over the Indian Officers and men, and they finally agreed to take horse flesh, the 48th Pioneers being one of the first units to do so. In order to accustom some vegetarian Jats to it gradually, they at first made only

soup of the meat, but in a few days they were eating it eagerly and asking for more. Grass* was used for food when vegetables failed. At first this had distressing results, until the Medical Officer issued instructions as to which grasses were edible and which poisonous. By the middle of March grass could no longer be found, and the number of scurvy and beri-beri cases increased. The British officers suffered from a craving for something sweet.

Kut was occasionally bombed by aeroplanes, the enemy guns fired into the place on most days, and walking in the open by daylight was prohibited on account of sniping. It was a monotonous life for the men, spending the day in trenches and dug-outs, and going out on most nights to work on bunds or trenches. As time went on most of the sepoys looked like skeletons, and casualties from sniping and sickness gradually reduced the numbers available for work. The fortitude and discipline of the sepoys of the 48th Pioneers remained very good throughout, though their physical condition declined.

On two occasions the 48th were detailed to take part in contemplated sorties. The first on the 22nd February, when they were ready under arms the whole day. Again on the 8th March, when the relieving force attacked the Dujaila redoubt, the Pioneers were to form part of a column which was to cross the river if the Turks retired. The battalion marched at 3.30 a.m. to the rendezvous in a palm grove South-East of the town and remained there in readiness to cross the river till the next morning. The noise of the guns at Dujaila could be heard very clearly, and at night the shell bursts could be seen.

On the 16th April our aeroplanes began dropping food into Kut. The 48th had marked out an area for the bags to be dropped into and a party with mules was stationed near by to pick them up. One 100 lb. bag of flour fell on a sepoy and killed him. Welcome as this food was to the garrison, there was not enough

* One sort of grass was also eaten by the relieving force.

of it to make much difference. One of our planes was driven down by a Turk.

The Arab inhabitants of Kut were starving in April, and some of them tried to get away by floating on inflated skins or swimming down stream, but the Turkish river piquets shot them ruthlessly.

A last disappointment came on the night of the 24th/25th April, when the "Julnar" made its attempt to run supplies into Kut. Gun fire could be heard, and this got nearer and nearer, till about 1 a.m., when it ceased, and it was guessed that the attempt had failed. Next morning the "Julnar" could be discerned stranded down stream, and the 5 inch guns in Kut tried to destroy her but failed.

On the 25th and 26th everyone in Kut was very depressed, it was realized that there was no hope left, and there was no sign of action down stream. All food, except meat, a little food dropped by aeroplanes and two days' emergency rations had been finished on the 21st, so, after the failure of the "Julnar," complete starvation was impending. On the 27th and 28th General Townshend carried out negotiations with Halil Pasha, trying to get him to allow the garrison to return to India on parole, but the Turks insisted on unconditional surrender, the only concession allowed being that the sick in hospital could be sent down stream in exchange for healthy Turk prisoners of war. All firing had, of course, ceased, and the garrison found it strange to be able to walk about with safety above ground.

On the morning of the 29th orders were given to destroy guns, rifles and ammunition, each unit keeping a few rifles in case the Arabs should be troublesome. About midday a Turkish battalion marched in and took possession of Kut. The garrison was assembled in the palm groves near the town, and in the afternoon Turkish ships took as many as they could carry to Shumran, the remainder, including the 48th Pioneers, had to march there. The pace was very slow owing to the weakness of the men, but

the battalion arrived there at about 8 p.m. On arrival they were given a ration of three Turkish biscuits per man; the biscuit was made of barley meal and was considerably harder than a dog biscuit, and had to be soaked in water before it could be eaten. Some rations were sent up by ship from the relieving force, and on the 3rd May the 48th had the first decent meal they had had for months.

In spite of repeated protests, the Turks ordered that the British and Indian Officers should be separated from their men, and the first batch of officers* were despatched up the river by boat on the 4th May, followed later by the remainder. Although the officers had a trying enough time during their long captivity, yet the Turks treated them fairly well, and the main brunt of hardship fell on the unfortunate Rank and File. On arrival of the troops up country the Mussalmans were separated from the other classes of Indians and received much better treatment, but as all the 48th Pioneers were either Jats or Sikhs, theirs was indeed an unhappy fate. A few tried to escape — without success, but Havildar Gumana managed to get clear, being the first man of the 6th Division to do so.

Here is a description of the 48th Pioneers at the beginning of their captivity given by a British Officer eye-witness :—"All ranks were desperately hungry, and in some units hunger broke the bonds of discipline, Arabs and even Turkish soldiers were waylaid and robbed of food, sepoy snatched food from sepoy, and ration dumps were rushed. There was no sign of such madness in the 48th Pioneers and alone of Indian regiments they were employed to guard the ration dumps.

* Officers of 48th Pioneers who went into captivity :—Col. A. J. N. Harward, Capt. C. W. Neumann, Lieuts. E. N. Burdett, C. A. Raynor, — Souter, S. W. Biden; Capt. M. E. S. Johnson (Divnl. Staff), Capt. R. D. de la C. Corbett (attached Rl. Flying Corps), who died whilst a prisoner, and Capt. W. C. Spackman, I.M.S.

Also Lieut. W. H. Mathias, 128th Pioneers (attached Sappers and Miners), and Lt.-Col. E. F. E. Baines, I.M.S. (M.O. of 107th Pioneers for many years previous to the War).

“It was a sad but inspiring sight to see the 48th Pioneers march off from Shumran in perfect order, as if on an inspection parade. A senior Turkish Officer spoke most complimentarily of their soldierly bearing. Despite having no British or Indian Officers, the Pioneers remained a battalion during the dreadful marches, whilst some other units deteriorated into mere mobs. They bivouacked properly, detailed orderly havildars and rear parties to help stragglers, and issued battalion orders.”

A British Officer, who was left sick in Baghdad, moved up later and met the men of the 48th and found that they were still a regiment. He remembers with gratitude the food, help and kindness he received from them.

Of some 300 Rank and File of the 48th Pioneers taken prisoner, only 90 returned from captivity. The rest had died, chiefly owing to the callous and inhuman treatment they received from the Turks, who were in charge of them.

CHAPTER XII

“ KUT-AL-AMARA, 1917 ”

“ BAGHDAD ”

“ KHAN BAGHDADI ”

“ MESOPOTAMIA, 1914-18 ”

“ MERV ”

“ PERSIA, 1918-19 ”

FOR eight months after the fall of Kut, both Briton and Turk remained comparatively inactive on the Tigris front, though the rival forces were in close touch. Debilitated by the hardships they had endured, by the ensuing fierce summer heat, and by a deficiency in some items of rations, there was a great deal of sickness, especially scurvy, and many officers and men were invalided.

On the 19th May, 1916, it was found that the Turks had evacuated Bait Isa and the Dujaila redoubt, and during the next few days the 3rd Division advanced, with hardly any opposition, and occupied the Maqasis-Dujaila line. The 128th Pioneers marched with the 7th Brigade to the Dujaila redoubt, thence to Iman-al-Mansur, and then formed part of the line of piquets along the Maqasis canal. During this advance the troops suffered considerably from the heat and the scarcity of water.

On the 20th June the 128th Pioneers were transferred from the 7th Brigade of the 3rd Division to be the divisional Pioneers of the newly-formed 14th Division (commanded by General Egerton, formerly of the 7th Brigade). From June till December, the

128th* Pioneers dug many wells in the Dujaila depression, worked on the Light Railway under construction from Shaikh Saad to Sinn, which subsequently was continued to Atab on the Hai, and built blockhouses to protect the railway from marauding Arabs. Frequent dust hurricanes and the heat, which sometimes reached 120° F. in the shade, made life none too comfortable.

On the other bank of the Tigris the Turks showed no sign of retiring from their Sannaiyat position. The great heat made living in deep trenches so intolerable that breastworks had to be built behind our trenches. The 107th Pioneers were kept busy on this and other work, until on the 21st May sapping forward was again commenced, and this was continued until our front line at Sannaiyat was only ninety yards from the enemy. Owing to the heat nearly all work was done at night. The 107th had the usual few casualties whilst sapping, including Major Ashburner, wounded in the head by a sniper.

At this period the Turks had marked superiority in the air, and occasional visits by their aeroplanes added a little excitement to the monotony of trench life in the wilderness. On the 10th June enemy heavy guns, directed by an aeroplane, blew up three of our ammunition barges, providing an awe-inspiring pyrotechnic display. The machine guns of the 107th were sent over to the right bank and spent some weeks on the Chahela mounds worrying the enemy communications on the opposite bank.

Meanwhile important changes had been taking place in the command and organization of the force. Lt.-General F. S. Maude was appointed to the command of the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force, which was organised into two Cavalry Brigades and

* Joined 128th :—17th July, 1916, Major D. S. Graham; 14th August, Lt.-Col. F. A. Andrew (from 121st Prs.), who took over command from Major (tempy. Lt.-Col.) Goodfellow; Lt. K. A. North (32nd S. Prs.); in Sept., Lts. J. D. Aitkenhead, G. M. Smith, S. Baker; 26th Dec., Lt. E. N. Goddard.

Strength of 128th Pioneers on 23rd Aug., 1916 :—8 B.O.s (including the M.O.), 8 I.O.s and 445 R. and F. (by December strength had risen to 780).

two Army Corps, plus the 15th Division on the Euphrates front and the Lines of Communication troops. The 1st Indian Army Corps (Lt.-General A. S. Cobbe, V.C.*) consisted of the 3rd (Lahore) Division (Major-General Keary) and the 7th (Meerut) Division (Major-General B. Fane); the 3rd Indian Army Corps (Major-General Marshall), of the 13th Division (Major-General Cayley) and the 14th Division (Major-General Egerton). During the long lull in the fighting much energy was expended on the improvement of the communications and the supply arrangements.

It was decided that some Indian units which had proceeded to France at the beginning of the war should be relieved by others from India, and on the 27th August General Cobbe personally told the 107th Pioneers that they were to return to India and that the 121st Pioneers were to take their place in the 7th Division. The 107th much regretted having to go back before the war was over, but General Cobbe explained that it was considered politic to take them back to India whilst a few of them still remained who had originally sailed from India on the 2nd September, 1914.

The 107th Pioneers, strength† 4 British Officers, 10 Indian Officers, 189 R. and F. and 20 Followers, left Sannaiyat on the 22nd September, 1916, and sailed from Basra on the s.s. "Bankura" on the 2nd October for Karachi, whence they proceeded to Quetta.

The 121st Pioneers received their mobilization orders at Tank in Derajat, and embarked on the s.s. "Purnea" at Karachi on the 23rd September, 1916. The Transfrontier

Lt.-Col. H. P. Keelan.
Major J. C. Hathornthwaite.
Capt. W. B. Macleod.

* General Cobbe was formerly in the 32nd Sikh Pioneers.

† In addition, Capt. C. T. Davis, who had recently rejoined, and 182 men of the 107th remained behind as a draft for the 121st Pioneers. The B.O.s who returned to India with the 107th were Lt.-Col. N. M. C. Stevens, C.M.G., Major W. H. Ashburner, D.S.O., Lieuts. E. W. Geidt and J. Borlase. The subsequent campaigning of 107th Pioneers during the Great War is given in Chapter XIV.

Capt. E. T. T. Todd, Adjt.
 " E. H. B. Ozanne.
 Lieut. M. P. Pratt.
 " R. H. Baines.
 " J. S. Youngman.
 " J. S. Tilley.
 " L. H. Worlledge.
 " R. Lee, I.M.S.
 Subadar-Major Sardar Khan,
 16 Indian Officers, 714 R. and F.,
 and 55 Followers.

Composition :—

A Company, Pathans.
 B " Mahrattas.
 C " Jats.
 D " Rajputana Mussalmans
 (Meos.).

Det. from 107th Pioneers joined at
 Arab Village :—

Capt. C. T. Davis, 2 I.O.s and
 175 R. and F.

Joined on 5th Nov., 1916 :—

Capt. A. T. Sheringham, D.S.O.
 11th Nov., Capt. L. F. Bevington.
 13th Dec., Major F. E. W. Baldwin.

weeks to the 3rd Division on the right bank. Immediately after their arrival in Mesopotamia, the 121st, following the example of the 107th, converted their "mamootie"* cases to hold G.S. shovels, as the shovel had been found to be more useful in digging deep trenches, and they carried shovels and picks on their backs during the rest of the war, with a few "mamooties" in the mule loads.

For some weeks after the fall of Kut the independent company of the 12th (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Pioneers con-

Strength in June, 1916 :—

Lt.-Col. R. J. Cuming.
 Capt. S. G. C. Murray.
 " H. G. Maturin.
 Lieut. G. Rackstraw, Adjt.
 2nd Lt. W. A. Lovat-Fraser.
 " H. L. Bracher.
 " R. L. Shaw.
 " M. H. Hawkes.
 Lieut. P. Vieyra, I.M.S.

Subadar-Major Gyan Singh,
 5 Indian Officers and 579 R. and F.
 (By Sept. Bn. was brought up to
 strength.)

* *Vide page 197.*

Gaduns in their Pathan company were ordered to be left in India to join the 107th Pioneers. The 121st arrived at Basra on the 30th September, where the 107th passed them *en route* for India, and after a few days they proceeded by steamer up the Tigris, joining the 7th Division before Sannaiyat on the 12th October. They at once commenced their continuous work on trenches, anti-flood bunds and roads. One company was attached for some

continued to work on the trench system before Sannaiyat, and in May, 1916, it was sent down stream. After picking up some remnants of the 48th Pioneers and reinforcements at Qurna, it proceeded up the Euphrates to join the 15th Division, under General Brooking,

Composition :—

Lobana Sikhs and Jats.

Joined in August :—

Capt. G. D. Heyland.

„ F. D. Leslie.

In Sept. :—

2nd Lt. R. M. Jonas.

„ J. S. F. Hudson.

In December :—

2nd Lt. Young.

„ Bell.

„ Bourke.

at Nasiriya. Here Major Cuming organized them into a battalion, which at first was known as the 2nd Bn. 48th, or as “The Re-formed* 48th,” but soon was called the 48th Pioneers, completely taking the place of the captured† regiment. Following some strenuous training in the hot weather, it soon became an efficient battalion, and proceeded up the right bank of the Euphrates, making roads across the desert, bridging and preparing camps. We must, however, turn our attention back to the Tigris front.

On the 10th December, General Maude announced his intention of pushing forward on the right bank of the Tigris to secure a position on the Hai, and thus commenced the fighting which was eventually to turn the tide to victory in Mesopotamia.

At this date the Turks were holding Sannaiyat and thence their line ran along the left bank of the river to the Khudhaira Bend, where they held a trench system on the right bank stretching across this re-entrant; their line continued along the left bank to Kut, and then again on the right bank, forming what was called the Hai Salient. Of the British force, the 7th Division was on the left bank facing Sannaiyat, all the remaining troops being on the right bank, viz. the 3rd Division in the vicinity of the Triangle, with one Brigade holding the river bank up stream from Sannaiyat, to near the Sinn Banks; the Cavalry, 13th and 14th Divisions were in the Maqasis-Dujaila area.

To protect the right flank of the Cavalry and 13th Divisions, during their advance to the Hai, from

* The name “Re-formed 48th Pioneers” appeared in one volume only of the Indian Army List.

† When the Kut prisoners were released at the conclusion of the war, the officers and the few men still fit for service of the original 48th Pioneers joined this re-formed battalion.

a possible attack by the Turks holding the Khudhaira Bend on the right bank of the Tigris, the 36th Sikhs, 45th Sikhs and 128th Pioneers, or in other words, the 37th Brigade (less two battalions) with the 128th Pioneers attached, were ordered to move on the night of the 13th/14th December. These three battalions marched S.W. from near a point in the Dujaila Line, called Calf's Head, in two columns at 150 yards distance. The right column dug and occupied a line of piquets at 350 yards interval, whilst the left column dug support posts covering the intervals between the piquets. The 128th held some 1,200 yards of both piquet and support lines, and one of the columns was led during the night advance by Capt. Goad. This operation, which had been previously practised, was carried out with precision and met no opposition.

The next day the 128th sent out a patrol of 25 men, under 2nd Lt. Tomkins, in the direction of Kut, which drew the enemy's fire, and after obtaining some useful information, withdrew to the piquet line with the loss of 1 man killed and 1 wounded. In the course of this day the Cavalry and 13th Divisions advanced and secured a position on and across the Hai, with only slight opposition.

On the 15th the 37th Brigade, with the 128th Pioneers attached, advanced their line farther towards the Tigris. The next day the 37th Brigade was relieved by the 35th Brigade, but the 128th remained in the line attached to the latter Brigade. The line was then farther advanced and straightened out at night under hostile fire, the 128th having four men wounded. On the night of the 17th, the 35th Brigade and the 128th Pioneers were relieved, and marched to Atab, where they crossed the Hai by the bridge and then moved to Besouia. Here the 128th Pioneers again came under the C.R.E. 14th Division, and were employed on road making in the newly occupied area.

By the 6th January, 1917, the 3rd Division had established themselves within about 200 yards of the Turkish front line across the Khudhaira Bend, and on

the 9th a portion of this enemy position was captured by assault. The 121st Pioneers had lent Captain W. B. Macleod to the 34th Sikh Pioneers, who were working in this area, and on the night of the 11th/12th January Captain Macleod was killed whilst consolidating some captured trenches. Although they frequently counter-attacked, the Turks were relentlessly driven back with heavy losses, until on the night of the 18th/19th January they evacuated the Khudhaira Bend, the remnant of their garrison escaping by being ferried across the Tigris to the left bank.

The next task was to capture the Hai Salient and to clear the enemy out of the Dahra Bend, from the Liquorice Factory, opposite to Kut, up to the Shumran Peninsula. This entailed further severe trench fighting, but the enemy resistance was gradually overcome, and by the 16th February all the Turks holding these positions on the right bank had been either captured or killed. During the clearance of the Hai Salient and the Dahra Bend, the 128th Pioneers were employed each night on digging communication trenches, consolidating captured positions, or on other such work, during which they lost 4 men killed, 2nd Lieut. A. D. Marshall and 25 men wounded.

On the 17th February the 7th Division attacked the Sannaiyat position. The assault was made by the 20th Punjabis and the 1/8th Gurkhas against the portion of the enemy trenches adjoining the Tigris, and two lines were quickly captured and a counter-attack repulsed. A party of the 121st Pioneers, consisting of 2nd Lieut. R. H. Baines, 1 N.C.O. and 10 men, were employed in making a barricade in a Turkish communication trench leading back along the river bank from the captured position, when at 3.30 p.m. the enemy turned on a heavy bombardment and then delivered a bombing counter-attack, before which the two battalions retreated back to their original front line. A small party of Gurkhas, however, pluckily held on for some time near the river bank, and Lieut. Baines and his party continued to work

on the barricade, being unaware that our troops had withdrawn, until the enemy were right on them. Lieut. Baines then saw the Turks swarming over the trenches and he noticed that they were bayoneting some of our wounded. This working party and the few Gurkhas fought on for some time, but Lieut. Baines having been dangerously wounded, they decided to retire, and managed to get back to our line, with two Pioneers badly wounded. Havildar Phul Khan and Lance-Naik Makhu Khan received the I.D.S.M. for their courage in carrying back Lieut. Baines and a wounded sepoy, and Baines was awarded the M.C. The whole party behaved with commendable coolness. Although the Turks remained in possession of their Sannaiyat position, yet the attack had attracted the attention of the enemy to this flank, now the only part of their long line which was not protected by the broad and swiftly flowing Tigris.

General Maude's plan for the decisive stage of the battle around Kut was for the 7th Division to assault Sannaiyat again on the 22nd February, and draw as many enemy troops as possible in that direction; the 3rd Division to show activity along the river bank from Sannaiyat to Kut, and during the night of the 22nd/23rd to make a small raid across the river at Maqasis; the III Corps (13th and 14th Divisions) to start crossing the Tigris at Shumran at dawn on the 23rd, thus striking at the Turks' line of retreat; and the Cavalry Division to be ready to move in any direction. For the purpose of distracting the enemy, feigned preparations were to be made at the mouth of the Hai, as if a crossing of the Tigris was to be attempted at Kut.

The attack on Sannaiyat started at 10 a.m. on the 22nd February, by the Seaforths and 92nd Punjabis storming two lines of trenches near the river and repulsing counter-attacks. Then, at 3.15 p.m., the 51st and 53rd Sikhs carried the remaining portion of the Sannaiyat two front lines up to near the marsh. At dusk the 121st Pioneers dug eight communication

trenches joining up our original front line with the captured trenches, wired in portions of the new front against counter-attack, and consolidated some points, losing 4 men killed, Captain M. P. Pratt, Subadars Ruda Ram and Falel Khan, and 9 men wounded. Pratt was severely injured by the explosion of a trip-mine.

At about 1 a.m. that night, the raid across the river at Maqasis was successfully carried out by a party of the 27th Punjabis, who were rowed across in pontoons manned by men of the 21st Company Sappers and Miners and the 34th Sikh Pioneers. After inflicting some casualties on enemy piquets and capturing a trench-mortar, the raiders got back safely to the right bank.

Preparations for the bold enterprise of forcing a crossing of the Tigris at Shumran had been proceeding for some days. As their part in these preparations, the 128th Pioneers had practised men at rowing on the Hai near Besouia, had marked out tracks leading to the sites selected for the crossing so as to be distinguishable at night and yet not visible to hostile aircraft, and the company commanders had reconnoitred the river bank to ascertain what work would be necessary for the construction of three ferry heads. The troops detailed to be ferried across first, and then to cover the construction of a pontoon bridge, were the 2nd Norfolk Regt. (at No. 1 Ferry), the 2/9th Gurkha Rifles (at No. 2 Ferry), and the 1/2nd Gurkha Rifles (at No. 3 Ferry). Thirteen pontoons were allotted for each ferry; each pontoon consisted of two portions, each of which was carried on a cart and then had to be joined together at the ferry head. Volunteer rowers were provided by the 2nd Norfolk, 1/4th Hampshire, the Royal Engineer companies of the 13th Division, the Sapper and Miner companies of the 14th Division and the 128th Pioneers. The 75 rowers of the 128th Pioneers were detailed to No. 1 Ferry.

The site selected for the bridge was at the apex

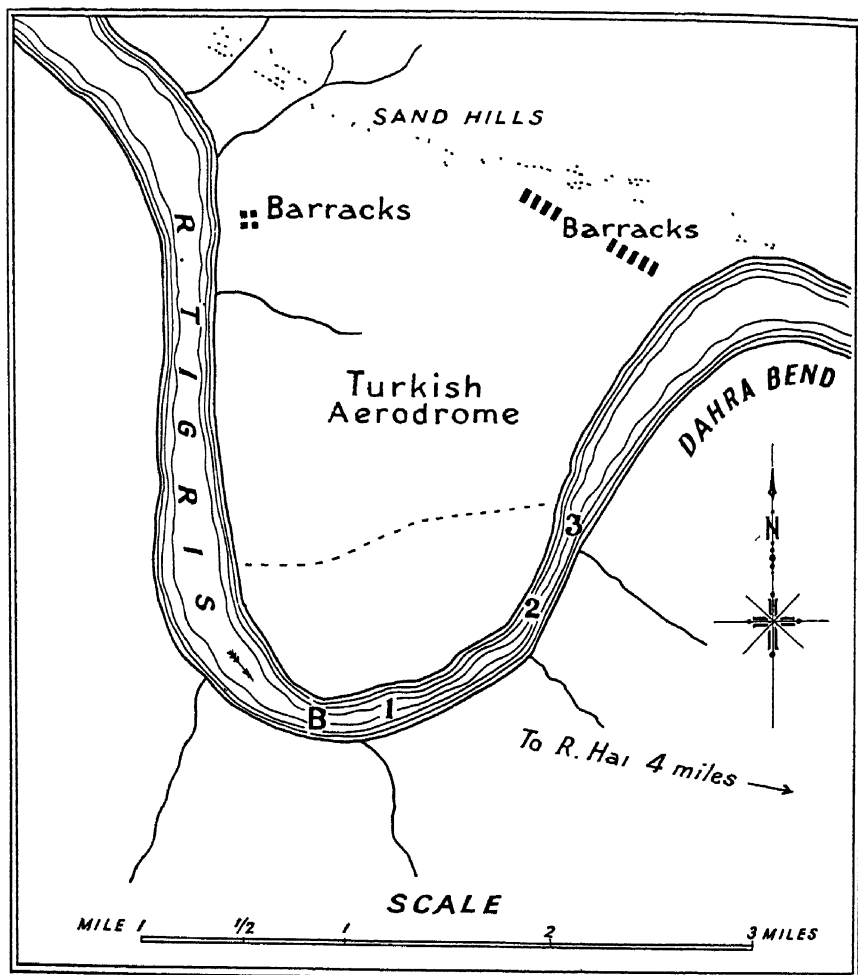
of the Shumran peninsula, where the river narrowed to a width of 340 yards; the three ferry heads were on the down stream side of this site, No. 1 being nearest to it. The near bank being steep required ramping by the Pioneers. The enemy were holding loopholed trenches on the opposite bank of the river, which was in flood and flowing strongly.

The 128th Pioneers left their camp near the Hai at 5 p.m. on the 22nd February, and the companies marched independently to the Shumran bend of the Tigris, as follows:—The Mahratta and Pathan company (Major Goodfellow and 2nd Lieut. Goddard) to the site chosen for No. 1 Ferry; the Rajputana Mussalman company (Capt. Goad and Lieut. Aitkenhead) to No. 2 Ferry; the Sikh company (Major Graham and Lieut. Smith) to No. 3 Ferry, and the Hazara company (Capt. Davison) with battalion headquarters (Lt. Col. Andrew, Lieut. Rundle and Lieut. Yin, I.M.S.) to a central position some 800 yards behind the three Ferry heads. The 75 rowers of the battalion, under Subadar Sher Afzal, reported themselves to the 2nd Norfolk and later marched with them to No. 1 Ferry.

On arrival on the river bank after darkness had fallen, the Pioneers prepared the Ferry sites by levelling areas for the parking of the pontoons under cover of the 3 ft. high river bund, by making ramps down the bank to the river edge, and by levelling portions of the shore for launching the pontoons. Dug-outs were also constructed for the headquarters of the Ferry-Master, Major Pemberton, R.E. Some sniping from across the river occurred throughout the work and a hostile machine gun occasionally swept the bank with traversing fire, but the night was too dark and cloudy for aimed fire, and the work was done so quietly that the enemy evidently did not realize what was happening. At about 10 p.m. the three battalions for the crossing, with the carts carrying the pontoons, began to arrive near their respective Ferry heads, and some of the Pioneers assisted in

THE SHUMRAN BEND

23RD FEBRUARY, 1917.



Site of bridge marked B.

„ ferries „ 1, 2, 3.

Covering force by evening of 23rd-----

carrying the pontoons about half a mile to the prepared parking areas. All this work was completed by about 1.30 a.m., when the troops rested.

Just before dawn on the 23rd, the pontoons were carried down the bank by men of the 128th and other units, the two halves of each were joined together, the pontoons were launched and then 10 men of the covering party, 4 rowers, and a coxswain got into each pontoon. At 5.30 a.m., when it was just light enough to see the opposite bank, the 39 pontoons started to cross the river.

At No. 1 Ferry the surprise was complete. Though some sniping fire was opened on the pontoons, the Norfolk, leaping ashore, quickly secured a good length of the left bank, capturing prisoners and machine guns. The pontoons were at once rowed back to fetch more men, but owing to the current these fetched up well below the ferry head. Thirty men of the 128th Pioneers, under Subadar Musa Khan, towed these pontoons along the bank up to the starting place, and continued to do this as the pontoons returned from each trip till 11.30 a.m., when they were relieved by another towing party under Jemadar Hakim Khan. The rowers of the 128th Pioneers, under Subadar Sher Afzal, were employed to take all the thirteen pontoons carrying parties of the Norfolk Regt. on the second, third and fourth trips, which took about two hours, coming under heavy shell fire. They were then relieved by rowers of the Sappers and Miners for about an hour, after which they did further trips.

Greater opposition was met at No. 2 Ferry, where only ten pontoons reached the left bank, the other three being carried down stream with all their crews either killed or wounded, but the leading party of the 1/9th Gurkhas, after a stiff hand-to-hand fight, secured a length of enemy trench. Lieut. Aitkenhead, with 26 men of the 128th Pioneers, then towed up the pontoons from where they had been carried down stream on their return journey. Owing to heavy rifle and machine gun fire turned on to them, this

party lost heavily whilst successfully towing these pontoons up the exposed beach, Lieut. Aitkenhead being severely wounded, 3 men killed and 7 wounded. Another party, under Subadar Abdul Latif Khan, I.O.M., towed up the second batch of returned pontoons, and subsequently other reliefs were employed as required. Meanwhile a section from this company of Pioneers was assisting the stretcher bearers of the 1/9th Gurkhas to evacuate their wounded to the Dressing Station.

At No. 3 Ferry, all the pontoons carrying men of the 1/2nd Gurkhas got across in the first trip, but owing to the very heavy casualties amongst the rowers of the 1/4th Hampshire, only four pontoons were available for the second trip, of which only one got across, the others being either sunk or swept down stream. This ferry then had to be closed down, but the small party of Gurkhas, who had established themselves on the left bank, managed to hold on.

After 10 a.m. No. 2 Ferry was also closed down, and all available pontoons from No. 2 and 3 Ferries were towed up to No. 1 Ferry by parties of the 128th Pioneers. The remainder of the 1/9th and 1/2nd Gurkhas then crossed at No. 1 Ferry, and the three battalions of the covering force, overcoming considerable resistance, advanced northwards up the Shumran peninsula, our artillery, mortar and machine gun fire from the right bank giving them much help.

The construction of the pontoon bridge had meanwhile started at about 7.30 a.m., the carts carrying the material galloping up across the flat country one by one, and as soon as they were unloaded galloping off again. The enemy guns concentrated on a dry nulla running some 200 yards parallel to the line of advance of the bridging train and thus did little damage. Perhaps the most wonderful feat was the bringing up on bullock waggons of two motor-boats, which towered eleven feet in the air and must have been visible for miles around. These motor launches were necessary for placing the pontoons in position and

anchoring them in the swift current. At first there were a number of casualties amongst men and mules from rifle fire, but as the left bank was gradually cleared of the enemy, the work progressed only under gun fire, which never succeeded in getting a direct hit on the bridge. By 4.30 p.m. the bridge was completed and the first to cross it were some 500 Turkish prisoners, who had been sheltering under the left bank. The ferrying now stopped, and the rest of the 14th Division crossed by the bridge. The brilliant military feat of crossing a wide and swift river in face of the enemy was accomplished.

The total casualties during the crossing of the Tigris on the 23rd were only about 350, of which over a half had occurred amongst the rowers at Nos. 2 and 3 Ferries, those at No. 1 Ferry having been comparatively light. The 128th lost 4 men killed, Lieut. Aitkenhead and 15 men wounded. The battalion received five immediate* awards from the Army Commander for conspicuous gallantry.

Whilst the crossing was proceeding on the 23rd, the 7th Division had captured the third and fourth lines at Sannaiyat, where the enemy showed signs of beginning to withdraw, and the next morning they were reported to be in retreat. Early on the 24th the 14th Division resumed their attack and, after some sharp fighting, reached the line of sand-hills across the North of the Shumran peninsula. The Cavalry Division crossed the river by the bridge and then passed through the infantry, but owing to the obstinate resistance of the Turks, they could make little progress and the Turks managed to make good their retreat towards Baghdad. The 7th Division, following up the enemy through the many lines of the Sannaiyat

* *Immediate* :—M.C., Lt. J. D. Aitkenhead; I.O.M., Subadar Musa Khan; I.D.S.M., Subadar Sher Afzal, L.Nk., Mohomed Issrar and Sepoy Said Amir. *Later Awards* :—Brevet Lt.-Col.—Major N. G. B. Goodfellow; D.S.O., Lt.-Col. F. A. Andrew; M.C., Capt. C. E. G. B. Goad, Lt. C. A. G. Rundle and Subadar Sher Afzal. Also a number of Mentions in Despatches.

N.B.—Subadar Sher Afzal thus obtained the M.C. and the I.D.S.M. for the same action.

position, emerged from the defile into the open country, but they were unable to advance fast enough to keep in touch with the retreating Turks. Thus the 7th Division at last found themselves through the Sannaiyat position, in front of which they had been held up for over ten months. The 121st Pioneers made several roads across the many lines of our own and the enemy trenches, and on reaching the town of Kut, they cleared it of abandoned war material.

The Turkish rear guard at first put up a stout resistance, but the action of our gunboats, in boldly steaming past the enemy rear guard and attacking their main body, helped to turn the retreat into a rout. The gunboats caught up the enemy ships and captured a number of them, including our old friend* the "Samana," which had fallen into Turkish hands at the surrender of Kut. The Turks left behind many prisoners, guns, ammunition and transport, as well as dead and wounded, strewing the trail of their retreat. Both the 121st and 128th Pioneers had much hard marching and work to do during the pursuit, and had a few casualties from shell fire. The 128th usually formed part of the advanced guard of the 14th Division to make crossing places over canals and nullas, and on one occasion the 121st assisted in the salvage of some abandoned guns from the river. On reaching Aziziya the pursuit had to pause to enable supplies to be brought up, and to await the Government's orders as to an advance on Baghdad.

The advance was resumed on the 5th March, and on the 7th the enemy were found to be holding the far bank of the Diyala river, and after several days' fighting, the 13th Division forced the crossing of the Diyala with great gallantry. Meanwhile a bridge had been thrown across the Tigris at Bawi, some miles down stream from the confluence of the Diyala, and the Cavalry and 7th Divisions having crossed by this, they were soon engaged with the enemy on the right bank. The Turks then abandoned further efforts to

* *Vide* p. 229.

defend Baghdad and withdrew beyond the city. At about 6 a.m. on the 11th March, 1917, a patrol of the Black Watch reached Baghdad railway station, just outside the city on the right bank, and during that day Baghdad was occupied by the British.

The 121st Pioneers, having been left behind for some work at Aziziya, did some strenuous marching to catch up again, and rejoined the 7th Division on the day Baghdad was occupied. They bivouacked on the evening of the 11th March near Baghdad railway station. The 128th Pioneers, marching with the main body of the 14th Division, reached Hinaidi on the outskirts of Baghdad on the 13th March.

After the capture of Baghdad, operations had to be undertaken in three directions, i.e. northwards up the Tigris, in a north-westerly direction towards Khaniqin to co-operate with the Russian forces moving from Persia, and westwards to the Euphrates, but only those operations in which our battalions were involved can be recorded here.

On the evening of the 13th March, the 7th Division started its march up the right bank of the Tigris, one company of the 121st Pioneers being with the advanced guard, and the remainder of the battalion forming a left flank guard to the transport. At about 9 a.m. the next morning the advanced guard came under shell fire from an enemy position South of Mushahida railway station, on the railway connecting Baghdad with Samarra, but of the Pioneers only one man was wounded. The attack commenced about midday, and by the evening the position was occupied by the 7th Division, the enemy having been driven off. The battalion spent that night on the river bank without food or blankets, and the next day repaired the river bund and made tracks for our guns and transport.

On the 17th the 121st marched back to Baghdad and were employed on works to hold up the flood water advancing from Lake Akkaquf towards the city, owing to the enemy having cut embankments and opened sluice gates on the canal connecting the lake

with the Euphrates. They also did some work on the railway.

On the 6th April the 121st marched with the 21st Brigade to rejoin the 7th Division, and they reached Balad station immediately after it had been occupied. The Pioneers cleared the captured position of abandoned rifles and ammunition, and then went on outpost duty. The 7th Division advanced to Harba on the 9th, where they paused until the 13th Division had crossed the Shatt-al-Adhaim on the left bank of the Tigris. At Harba the Pioneers worked on a defensive position, on roads and on repairing the damaged railway line.

The Turks had taken up a strong position at Istabulat, which was attacked by the 7th Division on the 21st and 22nd April, the enemy being heavily defeated. Whilst this battle was in progress, the 121st Pioneers were employed on moving a bridge over a canal to a more forward position, and in consolidating some captured trenches. Towards the end of the fight, some Turkish barges came floating down the river, one of them on fire, and a company of the 121st drove off by their fire some Arabs who were looting one of these barges, which had stranded on the river bank. The barges were found to contain fourteen field guns, many rifles, and half a million rounds of ammunition. On the 23rd the Division advanced, without further opposition, to Samarra, the Pioneers arriving there at 7 p.m. Before their retirement from their railhead at Samarra, the Turks had scattered the railway material about the country side, and a company of the 121st retrieved several engines and many trucks, some from the river. Another company was sent to escort the bridging-train from Balad to Samarra. The intense hot weather season then held up further active operations.

The 121st Pioneers remained in the vicinity of Samarra for eight months. They worked on digging trenches, wiring, constructing dug-outs and on the many details of the elaborate Alajak defensive position



SUBADAR-MAJOR AND HON. LIEUT. SARDAR KHAN, BAHADUR.
(Pathan)

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the Peace Contingent's visit to England, 1919."

covering Samarra, on both banks of the Tigris. A small party also built a cinema theatre for the Division, made of sun-baked bricks. In September it was thought that enemy cavalry were about to make a raid behind our lines, and the 121st were hurriedly sent to defend Samarra railway station, but nothing happened. The heat at times was very trying, reaching 120° inside the tents. On the 29th October Lieut. W. C. Milne* died of enteric in Baghdad hospital.

The 7th Division resumed its march up the Tigris in October, and on the 5th November defeated a Turkish force at Tikrit. The 121st Pioneers, however, were left behind at Samarra, and performed the arduous, though inconspicuous, task of providing escorts to convoys. Parties of the battalion, under Lieut. Youngman, did useful work with the water convoys which had been organised for each brigade, and Major Heyland was in charge of the whole of the water arrangements for the Division.

It had been decided that the 7th Division should be transferred from Mesopotamia to Palestine, though of course this was not known to the troops, and in mid-November the Division started to move down country on being relieved by the 3rd Division. The 121st Pioneers marched from Samarra on the 19th November for Akab, where they paused for some engineering work, including a motor road through the bush up the left bank of the Adhaim. During their march to Baghdad on the 9th-11th December, the men suffered from the cold, as they had but one blanket between two men and nine degrees of frost were registered at night. The battalion left Hanaidi by the new railway to Kut; they then proceeded by river-steamer to Qurna and thence by rail to Basra. They sailed in the s.s. "Shuja," with a detachment in another ship, on the 29th December, 1917, for an unknown destination, which proved to be Suez.

* Joined the 121st Pioneers in 1917 :—In March, Lt. T. Ward; April, Lts. W. C. Milne, B. V. H. Shaw, W. V. Clark; July, Capt. G. D. Heyland; October, Lt. G. Plomer; November, Lt. N. A. Shove; December, Major J. G. Greig.

We left the 128th Pioneers with the 14th Division at Hanaidi, outside of Baghdad. On the 25th March, 1917, the battalion marched down stream to Saifayfia on the right bank of the Tigris opposite to Ctesiphon. Here they remained until the end of April constructing a bund to prevent the flood water from Lake Akkaquf spreading farther down the river bank. During this month Lt.-Colonel F. A. Andrew, D.S.O., left the 128th to command an Infantry Brigade, and Brevet Lt.-Colonel N. G. B. Goodfellow again took over command of the battalion. Throughout May the regiment were employed on the Baghdad-Samarra railway.

On the 7th June the 128th* marched from Baghdad up the bank of the Diyala river to Baquba, where they assisted the 36th Brigade to dig defences, the Hazara company going with the 37th Brigade, which occupied Balad Ruz. At this time the Turks were holding an extended line along and in front of the mountain range called the Jabal Hamrin, and in October the British III Corps commenced operations against them, driving them off the hills and occupying Qizil Robat, with very slight opposition. Companies of the 128th accompanied various columns during these operations. All available technical troops then commenced work to ensure a good system of road communication across the Jabal Hamrin, with the result that this tangle of hills was gradually traversed by a number of roads suitable for wheeled transport, the 128th receiving much praise for their strenuous share in this work. Amongst some of the names given to these roads were "Queer Street," "Rotten Row"

* Joined the 128th Pioneers : In 1917, January, Capt. K. H. H. Davison, 2nd Lt. A. D. Marshall, with a complete company from the 106th Hazara Pioneers; April, 2nd Lt. A. P. M. Tipping; May, 2nd Lt. L. S. Hamilton; October, Lts. F. W. Tyson, C. H. Stewart and W. R. Lloyd Jones; December, Lt. T. A. Kemble. In 1918, January, Lt. B. S. Sowton, Capt. S. G. G. Fraser; June, Lt. J. M. Black; July, Lts. W. A. T. Pollock-Gore, T. H. Boss, M.C.; August, Lts. A. Leeming, F. Hurrell; in 1919, April, Lt. D. R. Stanley; July, Lt. A. Y. Glendinnine (attached from 1/5th R. W. Kent). During 1917-19 the Medical Officers were Lt. M. Dass, I.M.S., and then Capt. P. N. Cook, R.A.M.C.

and "Not so Dusty Bridge." On a few occasions the working parties came under shell fire, and on the 7th November a hostile aeroplane dropped a bomb into the camp of the 128th Pioneers near Talab Bridge, killing 2 Pioneers and wounding 10 and 3 followers.

We must now return for a while to the re-formed 48th Pioneers, who had continued to work on the anti-flood bunds of the Euphrates, on desert roads and on hutting in the vicinity of Nasiriya until the end of February, 1917, when they were transferred, via Basra, to Baghdad. They then marched up the bank of the Tigris to near Balad for work on the railway. Here an unfortunate incident occurred on the 18th July, Subadar Girdara Singh being murdered by a sepoy, who immediately afterwards shot himself.

In September the battalion returned by rail to Baghdad, and then marched to a camp in the desert, called Khan Nuktah, for the construction of the railway from Baghdad to Falluja on the Euphrates. Whilst the 48th were working on this railway, General Brooking won his victory at Ramadi on the 29th September, and a few days later the prisoners captured at this battle passed through the camp of the 48th on their way to Baghdad. On the 20th October the 64th Pioneers took over the railway work, and the 48th marched, via Falluja, to Ramadi. Here they were employed for many weeks on constructing an elaborate defensive position to guard against a possible enemy offensive down the Euphrates; but neither this position, nor the one dug by the 121st Pioneers above Samarra on the Tigris, ever had to be used. The 48th also did a lot of road work in this area, and one party had charge of a floating bridge over the Euphrates. In the absence of the C.R.E., Lt.-Colonel Cuming, commanding the 48th, was made O.C. Technical Troops, and had charge of all engineering work around Ramadi for some months. By viewing the defences from an aeroplane he managed to devise most effective camouflage for the trenches.

At the Ramadi Area sports held in December, 1917, the 48th Pioneers won the Tug-of-war, Relay Race, 220 yards, 100 yards, British Officers' Race and Indian Officers' Race, though they had had no athletic training, other than hard manual work, for very many months.

During February and March, 1918, the 48th* Pioneers formed part of Lucas's Column, which advanced to Hit with very slight opposition. On one occasion a company of the Pioneers with the advanced guard was bombed and machine-gunned by a hostile plane and a few days later a road-making party was fired on by snipers hidden in the hills. On the 28th February a bomb dropped on the battalion's camp by an enemy aeroplane killed two men and wounded three.

On the 11th March the 48th advanced with the 15th Division from Hit to Sahiliya, making the crossings over several ravines passable for guns and transport. The Turkish 50th Division, only some 5,000 strong, were holding a position higher up the Euphrates on its right bank near Khan Baghdadi. This position consisted of a group of trenches, called by us "P" trenches, covering the approaches to Khan Baghdadi along the Aleppo road, and a further system some four miles in rear, named "Q" and "R" trenches. General Brooking's aim was the complete destruction of this force.

For the battle of Khan Baghdadi the 48th Pioneers (less one company on road work) were attached to Andrew's 50th Brigade Group. Andrew's Group commenced the advance from Sahiliya along the Aleppo road towards Khan Baghdadi at 9 p.m. on the 25th March, 1918, followed at midnight by Lucas's 42nd Brigade Group. At 3.30 a.m. General Cassels, with the 11th Cavalry Brigade and the armoured

* Joined the 48th Pioneers, in 1916, Major S. R. L. Browning; in 1917, October, Lts. R. R. Reed, K. S. Master, M.C., I.M.S.; December, Lt. L. F. M. Blake; in 1918, April, Lt. J. B. F. Hodson; June, Lt. W. H. S. Gee; July, Lt. N. B. Rudd; August, Lt. C. W. Cooke; 1919, Lt. R. A. Badham.

motor-cars, started off to make a detour round the West flank of the Turkish position, with the intention of getting astride their line of retreat. The rest of the Division remained at Sahiliya prepared to advance on the 26th.

One company of the 48th was detailed to remain with the artillery and to move forward when they advanced, making good any bad places which the guns would have to cross. The battalion headquarters and two companies were originally ordered to follow in rear of the 1st Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire L.I. in the attack on the "P" trenches, but at about 1 a.m., when Andrew's Group had advanced ten miles along the Aleppo road, it was decided to send only one company each from the 6th Jats (on right), the 1st Oxford (centre) and the 24th Punjabis (left) against these trenches, to occupy them if resistance was slight, but to withdraw if the Turks were found in strength; this alteration in the orders, however, was not received by the 48th Pioneers, as they had lost touch with the infantry in the dark when the Machine Gun Company had moved off the road very quickly. Firing was heard in front for a short spell, and then all was quiet again. What had happened was that these three companies, finding the enemy to be in strength, had withdrawn after a short fight, but the 48th imagined that the trenches had been captured and that the Brigade was pushing on. The half battalion of Pioneers, therefore, marched by compass bearing towards a Flat Plateau, as originally ordered. After advancing quite by themselves for some time in the dark, they suddenly came upon the right part of the "P" trenches and a heavy fire at close quarters was opened on them from three directions and the men were ordered to lie down and dig in. The Pioneers were in a slight depression, and the enemy's fire going high in the dark, they were very lucky to have only three men hit. As they were unable to discover any of our infantry either to right or left and realized that they were quite isolated, it was decided to retire

by the line advanced along. As soon as it began to get light the 24th Punjabis were seen on the west side of the Aleppo road, and the 48th got back safely to the Brigade, though a bit wearied from walking over rough ground all through the night.

During the morning of the 26th the "P" trenches were quickly captured, and our troops then pushed on until they were held up by enemy trenches sited along some cliffs rising from a ravine. In the evening our infantry, well supported by accurate artillery fire, overran this position, capturing four guns and many prisoners. Meanwhile Cassels' cavalry and armoured cars had established themselves right behind the Turks, cutting off their retreat. The Turks put up very little further fighting, and during that night and the next morning large groups of them readily surrendered whenever our troops came upon them. In this battle the British casualties amounted to only 36 killed and 123 wounded, whilst General Brooking captured over 5,000 Turks, including their Divisional Commander and some German officers, 12 guns and much other war material,—a remarkable achievement, though the fighting spirit of the Turk had clearly deteriorated.

The 48th Pioneers worked on improving the communications during the advance on the 26th and frequently came under shell fire, two long range guns from the other (left) bank of the river being particularly annoying. They bivouacked for the night on high ground near Khan Baghdadi, and on the 27th improved the road towards Haditha and also cleared the battlefield, salving many Turkish rifles and half-starved transport animals. One company was ferried across to the left bank of the Euphrates to search for guns, ammunition, and stray Turks. They at once came upon the position from which the two enemy 10.5 cm. guns had been firing, but no trace of the guns themselves was found.

During the few days immediately following the battle, the armoured cars made a successful raid

seventy-three miles beyond Ana, and then the 15th Division settled down for the hot weather with its advanced brigade at Haditha, but the 48th continued to work on the seemingly endless task of improving the road communications. It is unusual to find anything so frivolous in an official document, but attached to the war-diaries of the 48th Pioneers for this period are some rhymes, of which the following are extracts :—

“ If you want a road, a little road, just come to us and say,
 ‘ We want a road, a little road ’; we’ll make you one a day :
 Forty feet or thirty feet or any size you like,
 To take a car without a jar, a Lamb* or motor bike :
 A sandy road, a handy road, a road of rock or clay,
 The Pioneers know what you want, at least that’s what they say.”

And seven verses of this sort of thing :—

“ The Generals came up one by one,
 There’s one more road to make,
 They said, ‘ Have you got this road all done ? ’
 There’s one more road to make.”

Chorus.

“ One more road,
 Just a forty foot wide one,
 One more road,
 There’s one more road to make.”

“ The Ford vans came up three by three,
 There’s one more road to make.
 They said, ‘ Have you a road for me ? ’
 There’s one more road to make.”

Chorus.

The composition of both the 48th and 128th Pioneers had got rather mixed up at times, owing to Mazbi Sikhs and Hazaras having joined as reinforcements, and the effective strengths were well up to a thousand each. The Mazbi Sikhs were, however, transferred to the 34th Sikh Pioneers, and in August, 1917, the Hazara company, which had done excellent service under Captain Davison with the 128th Pioneers,

* Lamb, i.e. Light Armoured Motor Battery.

had been sent to rejoin their own regiment* in India, as well as some Hazaras attached to the 48th. In May, 1918, a new battalion called the 1st Bn. 155th Pioneers was formed at Baghdad for transfer to Egypt, and to this battalion the 48th sent a Jat company under Captain Leslie, and the 128th sent a Rajputana Mussalman company (all Meos of the 121st attached to the 128th) under Captain Fraser and Lieut. Tipping; the other two companies of the 1/155th † were provided by the 34th and 64th Pioneers. After these adjustments the composition of the 48th Pioneers was again Jats and Lobana Sikhs, and that of the 128th was "A" company, Sikhs; "B," Mahrattas; "C," Pathans and "D," Rajputana Mussalmans.

Before the close of 1917 the Bolshevik revolution had succeeded, Lenin had come into power and in consequence the Russian force in Persia had begun to dwindle away. The British had, therefore, to take steps to check enemy penetration through that country towards Afghanistan and the frontier of India. "Dunsterforce" was organised at Baghdad, and later, in 1918, proceeded through Persia up to the Caspian Sea, where it had amazing adventures around Baku. It was decided to make the rough track from Khaniqin, through Qasr-i-Shirin, then over the Pai Taq pass to Kirind and Kermanshah and onwards fit for motor traffic, so early in 1918 the 128th Pioneers crossed the frontier into Persia for this work. In February one company marched to Kermanshah with Mathews' Column, which was one of the first small British forces to move up this track, at that time partially blocked by snow. In July, 1918, the 48th Pioneers were transferred from the Euphrates front, via Baghdad, to assist in this road making on what was known as the Persian Line of Communications. Four companies of Sappers were also employed on this work. The 48th continued the road from Kermanshah to Bisitun,

* The 106th Hazara Pioneers subsequently came out to Mesopotamia to join the newly-formed 18th Division.

† The raising of the 2/155th is referred to in the next Chapter.

whilst for most of the time the 128th worked on and about the Pai Taq pass. Companies of Pioneers were occasionally attached to small columns for minor operations against local tribesmen.

On the other side of Persia, the Eastern Persian Cordon had been established to keep enemy parties and agents from entering Afghanistan. The northern half of this Cordon had been held by the Russians, but on the disintegration of their force, the whole line had to be taken over by troops from India, and in October, 1918, the 107th* Pioneers marched into East Persia, where they remained for two years. Thus three of our battalions were serving in Persia at the same time. In October a small British force had some severe fighting with the Bolsheviki in Trans-Caspia and occupied Merv. The battalions serving on the Eastern Persian Cordon, as well as those in Trans-Caspia, were granted "Merv" as a battle-honour.

By the end of September the Turkish main army in Palestine had been routed and the Turks had begun to seek for peace, but in the meantime the British I Corps on the Tigris had started its advance towards Mosul. Having forced a way through the Fat-ha Gorge, General Cobbe attacked the enemy with the 17th and 18th Divisions at Sharqat, while Cassels' cavalry got astride of their communications, and by the 30th October he had decisively defeated the Turks, capturing their commander, over 11,000 prisoners, 51 guns, and other war material. The following day news was received that an armistice had been signed with the Turks, and a few days later the British occupied Mosul.

Although the armistice had been signed, the Persian Line of Communications had to be kept open for some months, and the 48th and 128th Pioneers continued to work, for long hours seven days a week, on the road. In January, 1919, there were heavy

* For details of the 107th Pioneers on the Eastern Persian Cordon see Chapter XIV.

snowfalls in the Persian hills, and the Pioneers built themselves some wattled huts. Lt.-Colonel Cuming, D.S.O., left the 48th Pioneers in March, on proceeding on leave to England, via Baku, and Major Maturin took over command.

In May, 1919, the joyful tidings came that both battalions were to return to India. The 48th concentrated at Bisitun, and on the 6th May started the march of two hundred odd miles down to railhead, near Qizil Robot. The 128th set out from Sermil (between Pai Taq and Karind) on the 25th, and went right down to Basra, where they prepared for embarkation; the 48th remaining at Baghdad in expectation of orders to continue their journey. Their hopes, however, of returning home were rudely upset by trouble breaking out in Kurdistan, and both battalions received orders to move up country to take part in operations against the Kurds.

The 48th Pioneers were railed to Baiji (the rail-head above Tikrit), whence two companies, under Major Maturin, marched up to Kirkuk in Kurdistan, where they did a lot of piqueting the hills. One of these companies was with Morris's Column at Kara Anjir, when on the 3rd June they and one company of the 1/3rd Gurkha Rifles were sent out six miles to retrieve some A.T. carts, whose drivers and escort had been massacred in a gorge by the Kurds. The retirement was difficult, as it was followed up through the rugged country by mounted Kurds, and this company of the 48th had a hot time on rear guard, losing 2 men killed and 2 wounded. The heat by day at this time rose to 114°, and at night it was uncomfortably cold. A little later the remaining two companies marched up to Kirkuk, and companies of the battalion were employed until October in holding various posts and on road making at and around Altun Kupri, Chamchamal, Kirkuk and Tauq. At one post some excitement was caused by three sepoy being bitten on the same night by snakes; one of the men died from the bite.

The story* goes that on one occasion in Kurdistan the 48th Pioneers bivouacked alone in a wild mountainous spot, put up the usual perimeter, posted sentries and turned in to sleep. During the night they were awakened by the sound of firing, followed by cries and screams. The men rushed to their alarm posts, but the sentries reported that they had seen nothing. At dawn patrols went out but could find no sign of any enemy having been near. A little time later a Staff Officer visited the battalion and in the course of conversation this incident was mentioned. "That's odd," said the Staff Officer, "because, as it happens, you were camped on the site where a detachment was ambushed and massacred some time ago!"

The 128th Pioneers also went up to Baiji, where they detrained on the 18th June. The Mahratta company was put on to making a lorry road from Fat-ha to Kirkuk, whilst the rest of the battalion marched to Mosul, arriving on the 25th July. They joined Wynter's column at Filfil (15 miles N. of Mosul) and marched with it through rough country where only pack transport could move. A few days later the Sikh and Pathan companies were left to garrison Sowara, whilst Nightingale's column moved into the Amedia valley. On the 9th August two companies of the 8th Rajputs took over the piquets at Sowara, releasing the Pioneers for road making. At Sowara post was also a section of No. 34 Mountain Battery, which had suffered heavy casualties at an action in the Berbadi gorge and had returned to Sowara to re-equip, with its personnel reduced to ten gunners and only one gun capable of firing. Colonel Goodfellow being in charge of a section of the Line of Communication, Major D. S. Graham was the senior officer in the camp. Sowara was surrounded by steep, bush-covered hills, and the seven piquet posts on the hill tops were held by men of the 8th Rajputs.

At 4 a.m. on the 14th August, the Kurds made a determined attack on the camp, and captured No. 3

* Vouched for by Major R. M. Jonas.

piquet and the whole crest of the West ridge on which it was situated, whence they threw bombs and fired into the camp. One party of Kurds boldly tried to rush the Mountain Battery lines, and eight of the ten gunners were either killed or wounded whilst dragging the gun behind some cover, from which they fired it at zero range, killing eight Kurds and stopping the rush. Lieut. Lloyd Jones was sent up with reinforcements of Pioneers to take charge of the troops on the East ridge, who were being hard pressed, whilst two platoons of the Sikh company, under Lieut. C. H. Stewart, moved out of camp to retake the West ridge and No. 3 piquet. Stewart having been quickly wounded, Subadar Karam Singh, Bahadur, I.D.S.M., took command and gallantly led his men up the ridge under heavy fire and, after being reinforced by a small party of the 8th Rajputs under Lieut. Pattullo, drove the Kurds off the hill. A number of the enemy's dead were left strewn about the top of the ridge, eight being found at No. 3 piquet. On the East ridge there was also sharp fighting, and here Jemadar Hakim Khan, with his platoon of Pathans, frustrated the enemy's attempts to close round No. 6 piquet. Two aeroplanes flew over Sowara during the fight, but could see nothing of the Kurds owing to the bushes. Two platoons of Pathans, under Subadar Musa Khan, Bahadur, I.O.M., were sent off to the next camp to escort back a section of the Mountain Battery, which duly arrived at Sowara soon after midday; their fire then helped to clear out the Kurds, who by 2.30 p.m. were entirely driven off. In this sharp little fight the two companies of the 128th Pioneers* lost 8 men killed, and Lieut. Stewart and 26 men wounded; the Rajputs and Gunners also had a number of casualties.

On the conclusion of these operations in Kurdistan, the 48th and 128th Pioneers reached Baghdad on the

* As immediate awards for this fight the M.C. was given to the Adjutant, Lieut. (Acting Captain) E. N. Geddard, O.B.E., and the I.D.S.M., to Jemadar Hakim Khan and Naik Ladha Singh.

28th and 29th October, and Basra on the 4th and 5th December respectively. But once more they were to be disappointed, as owing to some trouble with the Arabs the embarkation orders were cancelled and both battalions were moved up the Euphrates, the 48th to Samawa and the 128th to Nasiriya, where they took over garrison duties, one company of the 128th being detached to Ur. It is recorded that the men of both battalions took this second disappointment in a fine manner. They were back in Basra early in January, 1920; the 48th Pioneers, commanded by Captain R. M. Jonas, sailed for India in the s.s. "Chakdina" on the 6th January, and the 128th Pioneers in the s.s. "Cooeyanna" on the 17th.

Of the officers of the 128th Pioneers who returned to India with the battalion, Lt.-Colonel N. G. B. Goodfellow, C.I.E., Subadar Major Khrishna Bhosle, Bahadur, I.D.S.M., and Subadar Karam Singh, Bahadur, I.O.M., had left India on the 2nd November, 1914, and had served continuously with the battalion for over five years of strenuous active service, and of the eleven Indian Officers, three had the O.B.I., two the I.O.M., and five the I.D.S.M.

The Pioneers had pulled their full weight in Mesopotamia, and it is hard to believe that the services of these hard working, hard marching and hard fighting battalions will not be missed, should the Indian Army again find itself engaged in a campaign in a similarly undeveloped country.

CHAPTER XIII

“ SUEZ CANAL ”

“ EGYPT, 1915 ”

“ MEGIDDO ”

“ SHARON ”

“ PALESTINE, 1918 ”

WE must now hark right back to the end of October, 1914, when Turkey, feeling quite certain that she was backing the winning side, openly came into the war as an ally of Germany and Austria. At the behest of Germany, Turkey at once started preparations for the invasion of Egypt, with the intention of getting a hold on that “throat of England” the Suez Canal and in expectation of her former subjects, the Egyptians, rising in her favour and rallying to her proclamation of a “Jihad.”

The eastern boundary of Egypt ran from Rafa on the Mediterranean to the head of the Gulf of Akaba, so the Turks had the formidable task of crossing some 120 miles of desert before reaching the Canal. Our outposts in this desert were soon withdrawn, and it was decided to await the arrival of the Turks on the actual banks of the Canal. The British regular troops forming the normal garrison of Egypt had been taken for service elsewhere, and had been replaced by a Territorial Division, the Australian and New Zealand troops were ordered to disembark in Egypt to complete their training there, and India arranged to send a collection of Indian and Imperial Service battalions sufficient to form two divisions, but with only one mountain artillery brigade. Of this garrison, the Territorials, Australians and New Zealanders were stationed round about Cairo, whilst the Indian troops

were detailed for the Suez Canal Defences, under the command of Major-General A. Wilson. Nearly all of the Egyptian Army itself was required in the Sudan, and only a few units were available for use against the Turks.

The 128th Pioneers received their orders to mobilize on the 13th October, 1914, whilst they were employed

Lt.-Col. A. H. D. Creagh, M.V.O.
Major R. E. E. Kriekenbeek.
Capt. N. G. B. Goodfellow.
" H. W. Tobin.
" A. Forbes.
" C. E. G. B. Goad.
" F. H. Farebrother, Adjt.
Lieut. A. W. Pulverman.
" E. Birbeck.
" R. A. FitzGibbon.
" A. H. F. Hogge (23rd Prs.).

Subadar-Major Hassan Khan,
16 Indian Officers, 821 R. and F.
and 66 Followers.

Joined in Egypt from the Ceylon
Contingent on 16th Jan. :—

Lieut. G. H. R. Hore.
" D. M. Baker.
" C. M. Morris.

Joined in 1915, as 2nd in
Command,
Major E. B. Barratt (106th Prs.).

Composition :—

No. 1 D.C. Lobana Sikhs.
" 2 " Mahrattas.
" 3 " Rajputana Mussalmans.
" 4 " Pathans.

barked and camped on the West bank. The Pioneers then commenced work on digging the Canal defences, which consisted of short lengths of trenches along the West bank, and a few defensive posts and bridge-heads on the East bank.

The Suez Canal—at that time approximately 100 yards wide and 34 feet deep—is upwards of one hundred miles long from Port Said to Suez, of which distance two-thirds is canal and the remainder lake. Its banks generally are raised from 5 to 25 feet above

at Sitapur in preparing an aerodrome for the Indian Central Flying School, and were originally allotted to Force "A," i.e. France. They at once moved to Allahabad and on the 2nd November, 1914, sailed from Bombay for an unknown destination in the s.s. "Monteagle," together with the 2nd Q.V.O. Rajputs. The "Monteagle" formed part of a convoy of sixteen transports, escorted by H.M.S. "Duke of Edinburgh" and R.I.M.S. "Dufferin."

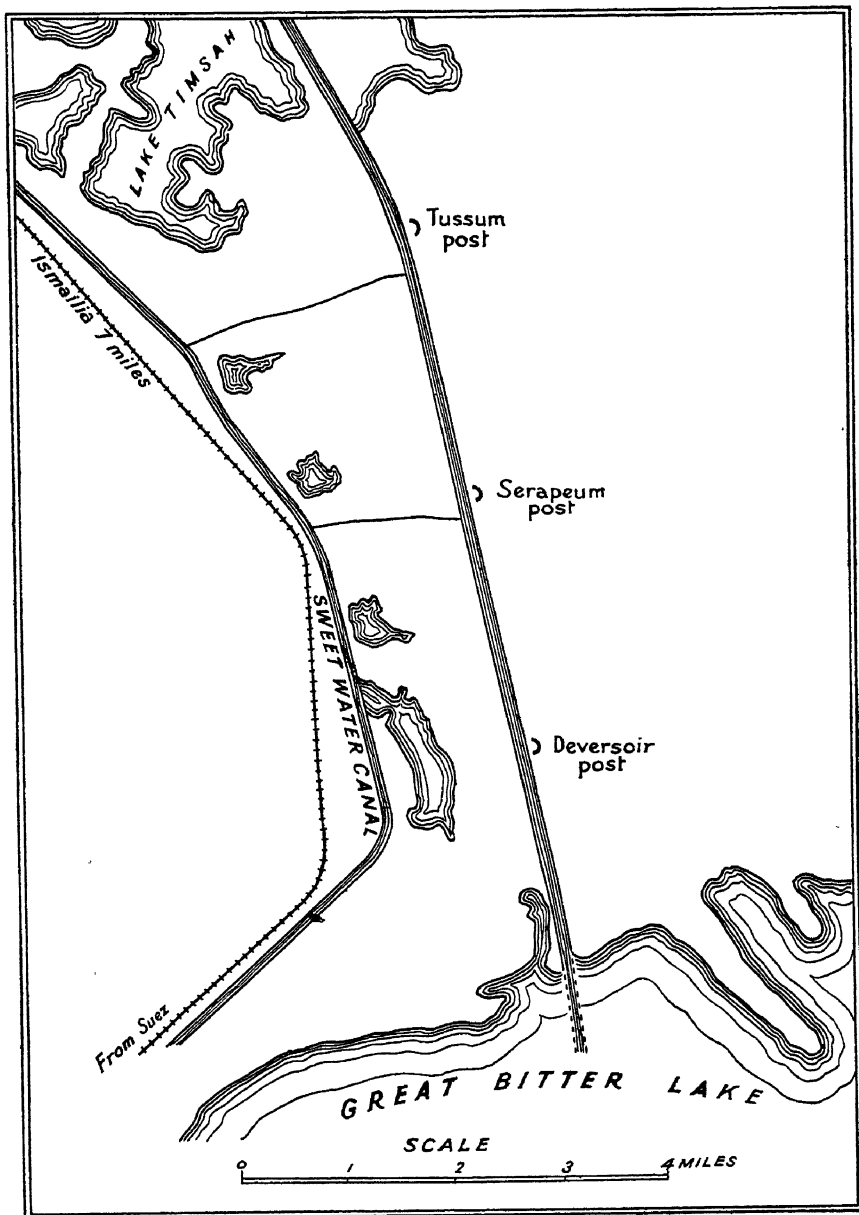
After a short wait at Suez, the "Monteagle" sailed up the Canal to Serapeum, where the 128th disembarked and camped on the West bank.

the desert level. The railway and the sweet-water canal run along by the West bank, the towns of Port Said and Suez being dependent on the water brought from the Nile by this canal. Eastwards from the Canal bank is the undulating sandy desert, but nearer the West bank along the sweet-water canal are a few patches of cultivation and occasionally some trees; beyond that the wilderness stretches away to the West up to the Nile basin. The most practicable line of advance for an invading army from the Canal to Cairo is to follow the sweet-water canal from Ismailia to the Nile.

Dragging their artillery, including two heavy howitzers, and their pontoon train across the sandy desert, the Turks duly arrived within striking distance of the Canal by the end of January, 1915. Their commander, Djemal Pasha, urging them forward to their very bold venture with these brave words :—" Warriors! Behind you lie the vast deserts; before you is the craven enemy; behind him the rich land of Egypt, waiting impatiently for you. If you falter, death will overtake you. Before you Paradise lies."

Despite some feeble feint attacks towards each end of the Canal, it was evident that the enemy's main attack would fall on some part of the centre, and the portion of the Canal chosen by Djemal Pasha for this was the sector between Lake Timsah and the Great Bitter Lake. This sector of the defence was held by four Indian battalions, with four Territorial field guns and four mountain guns and two maxims of the Egyptian Artillery. On the East bank were three posts covering ferry heads, namely at Tussum near the North end of the sector, at Serapeum in the centre, and at Deversoir at the South end, each held by two companies; the remainder of the infantry being distributed at intervals on the West bank along the nine miles of the sector. One platoon (Lobana Sikhs) of the 128th Pioneers, under Lieut. R. A. FitzGibbon, was sent to this sector on the 1st February as an escort to the 5th Mountain Battery, Egyptian Artillery,

PORTION OF THE SUEZ CANAL
ATTACKED BY THE TURKS.



and they dug emplacements for the guns about a mile South of Tussum on the top of the high West bank, so as to give a good field of view. The 128th Pioneers (less this platoon and 2 platoons at Ismailia ferry post) were in the 31st Brigade with the General Reserve at Moascar camp, Ismailia. The defence, which was so short of artillery, was supported by the guns of British and French ships stationed in each end of this section of the Canal, near the entrances to the lakes. Thus in this unique defensive position, infantry, artillery and warships were strung out in one long firing line, the obstacle in front of the fire trench being the Empire's main communication! Lack of organized transport and other circumstances of the time, however, had ruled out all other methods of countering the enemy's advance.

The night of the 2nd/3rd February, 1915, was pitch dark, with a sand-storm stinging the faces of the Indian sentries. All was quiet till well after 3 a.m., when the Turks began to approach the East bank in preparation for their crossing of the Canal by means of pontoons, boats, rafts and swimming. A lack of discipline first gave their presence away, as shouting was heard along the East bank South of Tussum post, which quickly ceased on a machine gun opening fire from the post. Nothing more occurred for about an hour, when the moon emerging through the clouds just enabled the watchers on the West bank to make out parties of the enemy carrying pontoons down the East bank and launching them on the Canal; the three points where their most determined efforts were made being a little South of Tussum, opposite to the Egyptian battery, and about a thousand yards farther South. The guns of the Egyptian battery and the infantry near these points, including the platoon of the 128th, opened fire and the Turks replied. Although much of it went high, the enemy's fire, especially from some sand-hills behind the East bank, soon began to cause casualties, amongst which were an Egyptian officer and two gunners killed, and two wounded, of

the Battery, and the platoon of the 128th Pioneers lost Lieut. FitzGibbon mortally wounded (he died the next day), three sepoy killed and four wounded. After being grievously wounded, Lieut. FitzGibbon ran a considerable way to the Egyptian battery to point out some target. The action of this platoon is best described in the words of Jemadar Inder Singh,* who took over command of it when Lieut. FitzGibbon became a casualty. He states :—

“My platoon constructed emplacements for the Egyptian mountain guns and machine guns all day on the 2nd February, and slept in a wood behind the Canal bank that night. At about 3 a.m. the sentry awoke me and reported that he had heard one rifle shot. I woke up all the men, and then Lieut. FitzGibbon arrived and ordered me to bring the platoon after him. He went off to the gun position on the top of the bank, and then came down again, meeting me at the bottom of the bank. He then led the platoon past the South of the battery. He took half the men himself down to the water's edge, ordering me to take the remainder and search a belt of trees 50 yards farther South for some of the enemy who had landed from a boat and gone into it. I searched the trees and found nothing. Hearing firing, I came out of the trees on to the Canal bank, joining Lieut. FitzGibbon and his men. I then saw three boats close to the East bank and we opened fire on them. Lieut. FitzGibbon was standing and walking about behind the men, and he was wounded just as I joined him. Nanak Singh had already been killed. The platoon remained there firing and under fire for about half an hour, during which time one of the enemy's boats once came half way across the Canal and then went back again, and another boat returned after coming twenty yards towards us. Then a third boat started from the bank directly opposite to us, went to our left front, and then made for a wooden hut on the West

* Jemadar Inder Singh and Col.-Hav. Ganda Singh were awarded the Indian Order of Merit.

bank twenty yards to my right. I saw four men get out of the boat and run towards us, one of whom was at once shot. Two other men started rowing the boat back again. I took Colour-Havildar Ganda Singh, Havildar Bhagat Singh and some of my men to attack the Turks on our bank. One of them fired, killing Buglar Uttam Singh, and both Havildars immediately bayoneted this man. The remaining two then threw away their arms, held up their hands and were made prisoners. I then established the platoon on the top of the bank, and we continued firing at the enemy on the opposite bank until 7.30 a.m., when we were relieved by a party of the 2nd Rajputs."

Two other boatloads of Turks managed to cross the Canal, but that was all. One of these landed just North of the Egyptian Battery, and was at once attacked by a small party of the 62nd Punjabis. After several Turks had been killed or wounded, about twenty of them escaped in the darkness and hid somewhere behind the West bank, where they were rounded up by the 2nd Rajputs in the morning. This may have been the party of the enemy which Jemadar Inder Singh says he was ordered to search for, but the point is not at all clear. The third boat got across about a thousand yards farther to the South, and all its occupants were either killed or wounded by a bayonet charge led by Major Skeen of the 62nd Punjabis. The attempted crossing had thus definitely failed, and as it got lighter, many abandoned pontoons and rafts, as well as numerous dead, were seen littered along the East bank.

Later during the morning of the 3rd, Turkish attacks on Tussum and Ismailia ferry posts were held up. Although the Turk could have had little hope left of effecting a crossing, he still had a chance of blocking the Canal by sinking a ship in the fairway, and his heavy howitzers went near to doing this. Several shells hit the R.I.M.S. "Hardinge," causing casualties amongst her crew, and forcing her to move out of the Canal into Lake Timsah. The guns of

two French warships then silenced these howitzers, but not before one of these ships had been straddled by their fire. At 4.30 p.m. the 128th Pioneers and the Headquarters of the 31st Brigade arrived at Serapeum by train from Ismailia, and the Pioneers were distributed along the West bank in support of the defence. There was a certain amount of sniping across the Canal during the night.

On the morning of the 4th, although the main body of the Turks had disappeared, there were still a considerable number of the enemy amongst the sand-hills and in trenches behind the East bank. These were attacked by companies of the 92nd, 62nd and 27th Punjabis, and the Mahratta company and machine guns of the 128th Pioneers, under Captain Goodfellow, crossed the Canal to support the attack. Another company of the Pioneers on the West bank rendered useful service by keeping down the enemy's fire and shot a number of them who raised their heads above their trenches. Finally all the surviving Turks in this area surrendered. When the Pioneers searched the East bank for wounded Turks, the body of a German staff officer was found amongst the dead. Over 700 Turks were captured during the fighting and some 300 of their dead were buried near the Canal. Lack of transport made effective pursuit of the enemy impracticable, so the Turkish force was allowed to retreat almost unmolested, except for a few reconnoitring columns which followed them up for about ten miles into the desert.

After the retirement of the Turks all was peaceful* along the Canal for the remainder of the year, the 128th Pioneers being employed on various works and on garrison duty up and down the Canal, and they occasionally accompanied reconnoitring marches into the desert.

* The landing in Gallipoli may have helped to divert the attention of the Turks from Egypt. None of our battalions took part in that campaign, but Lieut. E. Birkbeck was sent from the 128th Pioneers in May, 1915, to be attached to the 5th Gurkhas, and he was killed in August at Sari Bair, Gallipoli.

Towards the end of their time in Egypt, the 128th Pioneers were temporarily attached to the 28th (Frontier Force) Brigade, and General Younghusband insisted on the battalion mixing up the classes in their companies after the fashion at that time in the "Piffer" regiments, e.g. 2 platoons of Sikhs and 2 of Pathans in one company, and this organization* was kept up till some time after the battalion had landed in Mesopotamia.

Towards the end of November the troops of the Meerut Division began to pass through the Canal on their way from France to Mesopotamia, and, as recorded at the end of Chapter IX, the 107th Pioneers were landed in Egypt from the 16th till the 20th November. Later it was decided to send eleven Indian battalions from the Canal garrison to Mesopotamia, and, as one of these, the 128th Pioneers sailed from Suez on the 11th December. Their subsequent services in Mesopotamia have already been recounted in Chapters XI and XII.

Two years were to elapse before any of our battalions again set foot in Egypt.

* * * * *

During these two years the situation on this front had entirely changed. Following the defeat of a second Turkish offensive in August, 1916, at Romani, well out from the Canal in the desert, the British methodically advanced until they reached the border between Egypt and Palestine. A railway and also a pipe line to carry water from the Nile had been constructed from Qantara on the Canal to El Arish. Early in 1917 General Maude's successful operations in Mesopotamia had upset the Turk, and the pressure on the enemy was further increased by the British invading Palestine, though in the First and Second Battles of Gaza, fought in March and April, 1917, we failed to take that town. General Sir Edmund

* *Vide* composition given on page 244. At a later date the Frontier Force battalions themselves abandoned this mixed class organization in favour of Class Companies.

Allenby assumed command of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force on the 28th June, 1917, and by mid-November he had captured Beersheba and Gaza. Then pursuing the enemy across Philistia and through the Judean hills, he entered Jerusalem on the 11th December. After some further fighting near the coast and around Jerusalem, by the end of the year the British line ran from some five miles East of Jerusalem, round the North of that city, and then westwards till it reached the coast at a point nine miles North of Jaffa. This was approximately the situation when the 7th Meerut Division from Mesopotamia began to arrive in Egypt early in 1918.

The 121st Pioneers disembarked at Suez on the 15th January, 1918, and, after spending a few days at

Lt.-Col.	H. P. Keelan.
Major	J. G. Greig.
"	J. C. Hathornthwaite.
"	G. D. Heyland.
Capt.	L. F. Bevington.
Lieut.	N. A. Shove.
"	J. Borlase.
"	J. S. Youngman.
"	J. S. Tilley.
"	L. F. Hill.
A.-Capt.	W. V. Clark, Adjt.
Lieut.	G. Plomer.
"	L. H. Worlledge.
Capt.	R. Lee, I.M.S.

Subadar-Major Sardar Khan,
19 Indian Officers, 1,145 R. and F.
and 72 Followers.

Composition.

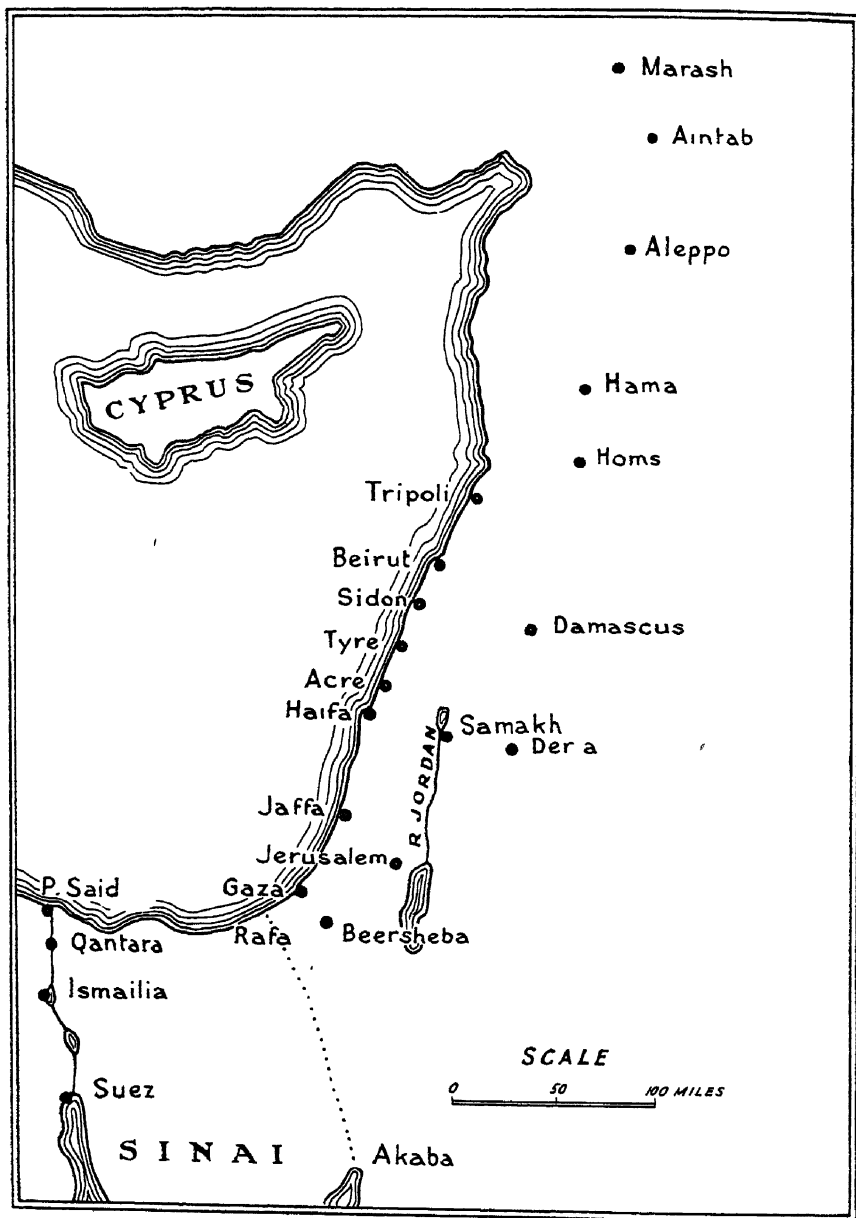
A Coy.	Pathans.
B "	Mahrattas.
C "	Jats.
D "	Rajputana Mussalmans
	(Meos).

Joined in April, Capt. E. B. Ozanne,
Lt. M. Bird; in May, Lts. H. J.
Hasler, T. Ward.
Left in June, Capt. L. F. Bevington.
Joined 18th Sept., Lts. N. B.
Bennett, T. J. O'Connor; Nov.,
Lt. L. S. Landon.

Moascar Camp, Ismailia, marched up the Canal bank to Qantara, whence they entrained for Palestine. From the 24th January till the 28th March the Pioneers worked at high pressure on making embankments, bridges and culverts to join up the railway from Rafa with the Turkish railway at Ergeig, near Beersheba. The 121st then went by rail to Ludd (Lydda) and joined the 7th Division on the North side of the Auja river near Shaikh Muwannis, five miles N.N.E. of Jaffa. They commenced work on road making, entrenching and erecting wire-entanglements. On the

9th May they witnessed an enemy aeroplane shoot

SYRIA, PALESTINE AND THE SUEZ CANAL



down two of our kite-balloons in flames, and the occupants escape by parachute—a sight which the sepoys considered was a first-rate “tamasha.”

On the night of the 28th May a portion of our front line was advanced nearer to the enemy, and the Mahratta company of the 121st went out to wire in the new posts after their occupation by the Leicester. One of the wiring parties, under Lieut. H. J. Hasler, lost its way in the dark and came up against a Turkish piquet. Hasler, who was leading, was unable to move as the bayonet of the enemy sentry was against his chest, but Havildar Umaji Sinde, the next behind his officer, thrust his rifle under Hasler's arm, fired and killed the sentry. The party then hurriedly retired, shot at by the now fully awakened piquet, Havildar Umaji Sinde being killed. They then collected near Dud piquet and completed the wiring, for which Lieut. Hasler was awarded the M.C.

In addition to digging and revetting trenches in the sandhills near the sea and constructing tracks up to near our front line by laying wire-netting over the sand, the Jat and Meo companies of the 121st were employed on draining a marsh near the sea coast, which they cleared up to a point well in advance of our front line. There being some deserted orange groves in “no man's land,” the sepoys used to return from work with their haversacks bulging with ripe Jaffa oranges. The discovery of a very ancient tunnel, which was re-excavated and repaired, helped towards the drainage of this marsh.

Two hillocks in the coastal sector, known as “The Sisters,” served as observation posts for the Turks, who could overlook part of our line from them. To deny the enemy this advantage, our line was advanced by a local attack at dawn on the 8th June. The Black Watch and 1st Guides Infantry having captured “The Sisters,” and beaten off counter-attacks, the Mahratta company of the Pioneers wired in some 1,000 yards of the new front during that night in face of considerable opposition, the Turks at one point being

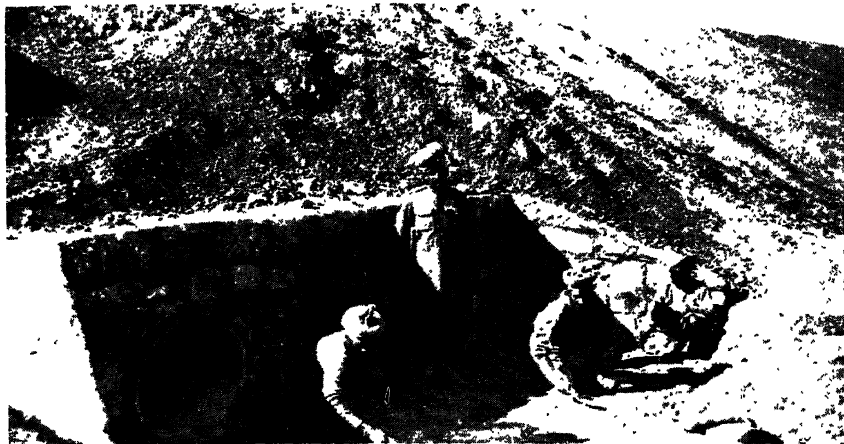
only 100 yards distant. For gallantry on this night, Subadar Laximan Jankar received the I.O.M. and Jemadar Naryen Singh the I.D.S.M. Wiring the front line and strong posts continued on many nights during June, the casualties of the 121st Pioneers amounting to 8 killed and 18 wounded.

Operations in the Jordan valley during February had resulted in the capture of Jericho and in the British line being extended and advanced, so that our right flank rested on the Dead Sea. From the Dead Sea the line ran northwards up the Jordan for ten miles and then stretched westwards across Palestine to the coast as before. On the 23rd June the 121st Pioneers were temporarily transferred from the 7th to the 75th Division. They marched, under the command* of Major Hathornthwaite, via Wilhelma, to near Rantis, where they worked on a metalled road towards the front, the only use of which was to help towards deluding the Turk into thinking our attack would come from this direction. The Mahratta company (Capt. Ozanne and Lieut. Youngman) had been detached at Wilhelma to join the Desert Mounted Corps, and were employed on making fit for motor traffic that ancient Roman road, along which, as the parable of The Good Samaritan relates, "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho." By the 23rd July the whole battalion was back with the 7th Division on the coast.

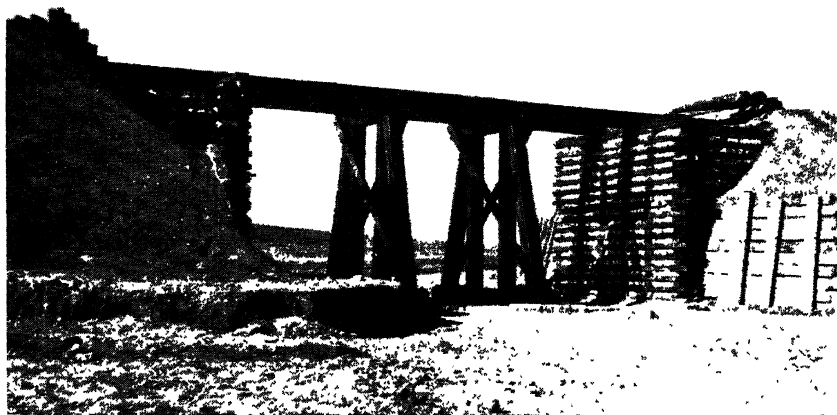
The great German attacks in France had made it necessary for British troops to be transferred there from Palestine, and General Allenby despatched not less than sixty thousand of his British and Australian personnel. Their place was taken by Indians, and to raise some of the new battalions required, one company was taken from each Indian unit in Palestine. As their contribution, the 121st Pioneers sent their Pathan company (Major Greig† and Lieut. Borlase)

* Lt.-Col. Keelan was on three weeks' leave to the U.K.

† Lt.-Col. J. G. Greig, C.I.E., was a well-known cricketer, who played for Hampshire and captained the European team in India. He was on the staff of three successive Governors of Bombay and is now a Catholic



MASONS OF THE 121ST PIONEERS IN PALESTINE.



RAILWAY BRIDGE BUILT BY THE 121ST PIONEERS IN PALESTINE.

to the 2nd Bn. 155th Pioneers, raised at Ludd on the 12th June. Major Greig soon rejoined the 121st, being replaced in the 2/155th by Major Heyland. Subadar Falel Khan from the 121st became the Subadar-Major of the 2/155th Pioneers. To replace the Pathans, the 121st formed another Meo company, as that class provided such an abundance of recruits.

On the 8th July, 1918, the 2nd Battalion 107th Pioneers disembarked from the s.s. "Chakdara" at

Lt.-Col. C. C. Cunningham.
Major G. C. Cooper, M.C.
Capt. T. L. Barker.
" P. F. B. Hickey, D.S.O.
" E. C. Fenwicke-Clennell, M.C.
Lieut. G. N. Maunder.
A-Capt. F. Parmenter, Adjt.
Lieut. A. E. Brown.
" F. F. Haigh.
" J. W. Wyles.
" J. H. N. Gower.
" J. Stephenson.
2nd Lt. B. Russell.
" S. P. Wilkinson.
" W. B. Watson.
Lieut. N. N. Saha, I.M.S.

Subadar-Major Rajab Khan,
19 Indian Officers, 1,048 R. and F.
and 69 Followers.

Composition.

2 companies, Punjabi Mussalmans
1 company, Jats.
1 " Sikhs.
Some Pathans and Mussalman.
Rajputs also included.

Joined later in Palestine.

Capt. I. L. O'H. Hare, Lieuts.
F. O. Cameron, H. G. Rich, D.C.
Green, F. A. McDougall, F. W. H.
Haswell, W. P. Keshaw, M. P.
Pratt, S. Birkett and Capt.
Nissim, I.M.S.

neering to the new battalion. Some I.O.s. and N.C.O.s were provided by various Pioneer units, the Subadar-priest. The raising of the 1/155th Pioneers is referred to on page 302. The other three coys. of the 2/155th were found by the 1/23rd, 2/23rd and 2/32nd Sikh Pioneers.

* Capt. C. C. Cunningham went to Antwerp with the Naval Brigade at the beginning of the War and was interned in Holland, whence he escaped disguised as a Dutch woman.

Suez. This battalion had been raised at Bareilly on the 26th July, 1917, by Major C. C. Cunningham,* of the 12th (Kelati-Ghilzie) Pioneers, from a nucleus of volunteers from the fighting classes serving with the 1st Labour Corps in Mesopotamia. Amongst these men were some ex-N.C.O.s of the 1st Sappers and Miners, who became Indian Officers. The 2/107th were also fortunate in obtaining three officers from the Indian Public Works Department — Capt. Hickey, D.S.O., Lieuts. Haigh and Wyles, —who brought the detachment over from Mesopotamia; they did much towards teaching engi-

Major coming from the 107th Pioneers. The 2/107th Pioneers received their mobilization orders at Allahabad on the 5th June, 1918, and sailed from Bombay on the 26th.

From Suez the 2/107th proceeded to Tel-el-Kebir, where, to their subsequent sorrow, they were ordered to hand in their Indian Pioneer equipment* and receive in its place the equipment of a British Pioneer battalion; the outstanding difference between the two being that British Pioneers carried all their tools on carts, instead of each man having a tool on his back, fitted into the special equipment worn by Indian Pioneers. Travelling, via Qantara, to Palestine, they reached Ludd on the 20th July. Although allotted to be the Pioneers of the 60th Division, yet from the time of their arrival at the front until early in September, they worked directly under the C.R.E., XXI Corps. They were encamped one mile South of Majdal Yaba, a village just behind our front line on the eastern edge of the coastal plain, and were employed on making a new road to near this village along the stony slopes of the foot-hills, their more forward working parties occasionally coming under shell fire. A hostile aeroplane was shot down and fell in the Pioneers' mule lines; on being stripped it provided some useful gadgét.

The reorganization of his army had delayed the date for General Allenby's big offensive, but by mid-September all was ready. It had been a remarkable feat thus to alter the composition of his force, train it in face of the enemy, and, within a few months, fit it for a great enterprise.

Much ingenuity was shown in deceiving the Turk as to where the weight of the attack would fall. Units were marched from East to West under cover of night and hidden in groves behind our line on the coastal plain, whilst all movement from West to East was carried out by daylight. The deserted camps, with

* Equipment of Indian Pioneers is described on page 4. The British equipment did not include masons' tools, which are useful for building culverts, etc.

dummy horses and other devices, were left standing behind the right of the line, and the Turk was deluded into expecting the attack to be up the Jordan valley.

The Egyptian Expeditionary Force, commanded by General Sir Edmund Allenby, was finally organized and located for the attack as follows, divisions being named along the front from right to left :—

CHAYTOR'S FORCE, in the Jordan valley, consisted of the Australian and New Zealand Mounted Division, the 20th Indian Brigade, two Jewish battalions of the Rl. Fusiliers, and two battalions of the West Indies Regiment.

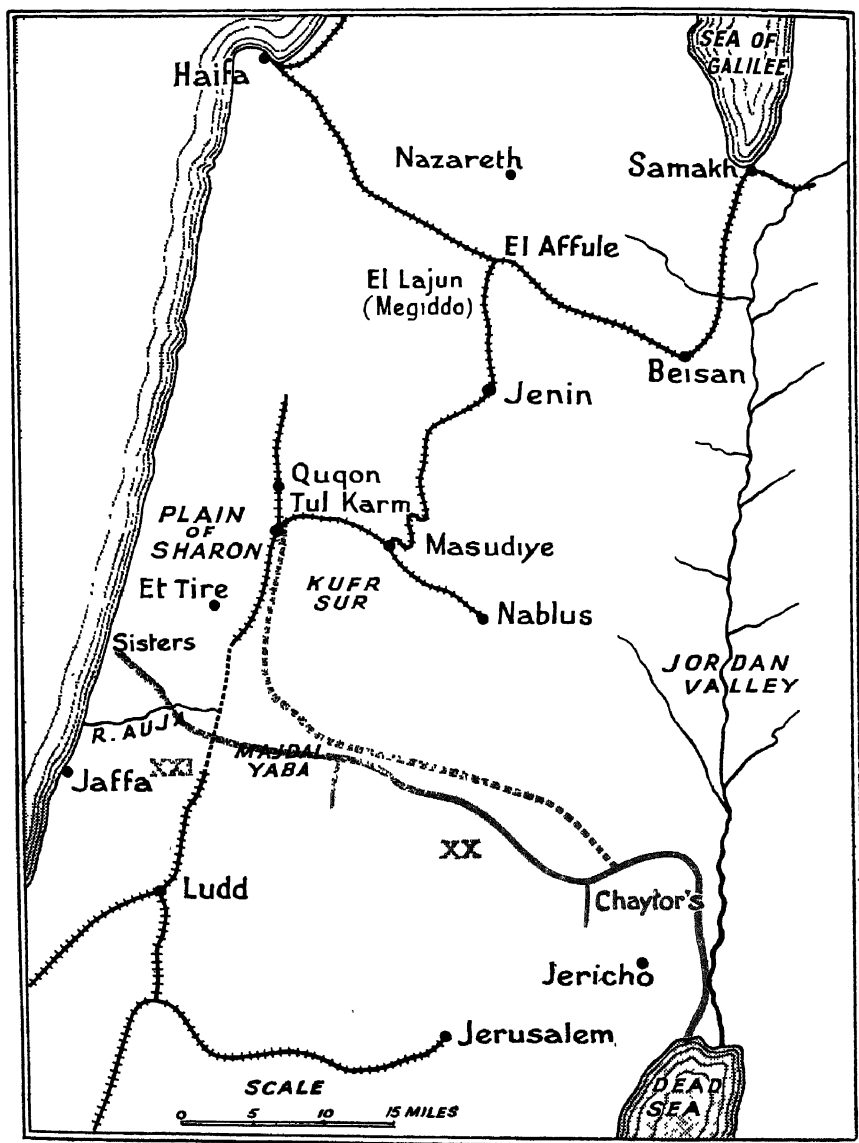
The XX CORPS (Maj.-General Sir P. Chetwode), facing the hilly area in the centre, was composed of the 53rd Division, Watson's Force, and the 10th Division.

The XXI CORPS (Lt.-Gen. E. S. Bulfin), stretching across the plain from the foothills to the sea, contained a French Brigade Group, the 54th, 3rd (Lahore), 75th, 7th (Meerut) and 60th Divisions.

Hidden near the coast behind the 7th and 60th Divisions was the DESERT MOUNTED CORPS (Lt.-Gen. Sir H. G. Chauvel), composed of the Australian Mounted Division, and the 4th and 5th Cavalry Divisions.

Of the seven infantry divisions, only the 54th was all British, the others being on the same lines as the 7th (Meerut) Division, with a majority of Indian personnel. The Desert Mounted Corps had eight Australian, five Yeomanry, one French and thirteen Indian cavalry regiments. Three complete companies formerly of our battalions were with Watson's Force, as this temporary formation consisted of the 1/155th and 2/155th Pioneers (detached from the 53rd and 10th Divisions respectively), a cavalry regiment and a detachment from the reinforcement camp. This little force was under Lt.-Colonel S. B. Watson of the 1/155th, who had commanded the 107th Pioneers for a period in France and Mesopotamia. How the density of troops varied in different parts of the line

BATTLES OF SHARON AND MEGIDDO



British front on morning of 19th Sept. —————

„ evening ”

is illustrated by Watson's Force holding seven miles of the line in the rough country facing Mount Ephraim, whilst the 60th Division, by the sea, had a front of under two miles.

The Turkish force, named Yilderim ('Thunderbolt'), was commanded by Marshal Liman von Sanders, and contained some German units. It consisted of the Eighth, Seventh and Fourth Armies, holding their line in that order from their right to left. Each Army had two Corps of several divisions. Although numerically inferior to the British army, the Turk is renowned as a stout fighter in a defensive position, and he had had plenty of time in which to fortify his line.

General Allenby's plan was for the XXI Corps to assault the Turkish trenches in the coastal plain, and then, wheeling to its right and using the French Brigade as its hinge, to sweep the enemy off the plain of Sharon into the hills, thus opening a door for the cavalry to pass through. The cavalry was to ride up the plain of Sharon and then strike north-eastwards through a line of hills into the plain of Megiddo, and to seize Janin, El Affule and Beison to cut off the enemy's retreat. After the attack of the XXI Corps had gone home, the XX Corps was to push towards Nablus. The Emir Feisal's Arabs in Trans-Jordania, acting on verbal instructions sent through Colonel T. E. Lawrence, were to start raiding the Hedjaz railway in rear of the Turkish left flank a few days before the attack, and later to co-operate in the pursuit. Zero hour was fixed for 4.30 a.m. on the 19th September, 1918.

By the 16th September the 121st and 2/107th Pioneers had moved into concealed bivouacs behind the line. A half battalion of the 2/107th, under Major Cooper, was in Mukhtar wood, temporarily attached to the 3rd (Lahore) Division. The 121st, in two half battalion columns under Lt.-Col. Keelan and Major Greig respectively, were with the 7th (Meerut) Division. The other half battalion of the 2/107th, under Lt.-Col. Cunningham, was with the

60th Division near the sea. On the eve of the battle, this half battalion of the 2/107th was organized into three parties, each accompanied by some Sappers, which were located just behind the front line on three tracks called Red Road (on the right), White Road (centre) and Blue Road (on the left). In front of each party was a group of wire-cutters, for the task of clearing passages through our own and the Turkish entanglements.

The night of the 18th/19th September was somewhat noisy, with a good deal of machine gun and trench mortar fire coming over. During this night both battalions of Pioneers removed stretches of our own wire along the front; they also filled in shell holes and improved tracks in rear of our fire-trench, the 2/107th having one man killed.

At 4.30 a.m. on the 19th, the British bombardment opened with a shattering roar, over a thousand shells a minute bursting on the enemy's trenches, and at the same moment our infantry went forward to the assault. Numerous Turkish signal-lights at once soared up, and the enemy guns put down their barrage. So thick were the clouds of sand, dust and smoke that, in the hazy light of dawn, little could be distinguished, but within a few minutes our infantry were swarming over the enemy's first position. In a remarkably short time the supporting positions were also captured, together with some 6,000 prisoners and 100 guns—a mere fraction of the captures that were to follow. The great wheel of the XXI Corps to its right then commenced, driving the remnants of the now demoralized Eighth Army into the hills.

Whilst the 3rd (Lahore) Division were storming the portion of the enemy's line facing them, the half battalion of the 2/107th Pioneers, under Major Cooper, remained in reserve in Muktar Wood. They then followed up the division, making tracks as they went, through the fields of millet where lay the Turkish and British dead. One place, called Railway Redoubt, was quite a shambles, with the bodies of

Turkish gunners and their harnessed gun teams strewn about in heaps. At 3.45 p.m. this half battalion arrived at Byar Adas.

The two half battalion columns of the 121st Pioneers, under Lt.-Colonel Keelan and Major Greig, moved forward at 4.45 a.m. (i.e. zero plus 15 minutes)* and at once commenced making two roads across our own trenches and those captured by the 7th (Meerut) Division to enable the guns and the cavalry to move forward. This work was performed at top speed, the guns not being kept waiting a minute. These two parties of Pioneers had no casualties, most of the enemy shells passing overhead into the area behind our original front line. The 121st Pioneers, still in two columns, then followed behind the 28th Brigade and passed Et Tire at about 4 p.m.

On reaching the road leading North to Tul Karm at 6 p.m., the 121st halted, the enemy being close ahead amongst the hills. Lieut. N. A. Shove was wounded on this road. The Pioneers rested here till 10.30 p.m., whilst Lt.-Col. Keelan and a Sapper Officer went forward to reconnoitre the route for a track to be made through the hills.

The task of the half battalion of the 2/107th Pioneers, under Lt.-Colonel Cunningham, near the sea shore with the 60th Division, was to make three tracks forward in continuation of the Red, White and Blue roads; this meant making wide passages through our own and the Turkish wire entanglements, and filling in portions of our own and the captured trenches. These tracks were to be marked with red, white and blue flags respectively, so as to be seen easily by the cavalry.

The right hand party, under Lieut. Brown, on the Red Road, sent out its leading section under Subadar

* The excellent official history of these operations appears to have gone astray about the time at which the Pioneers started work, as the only mention of them during the 19th September reads as follows :—"A pioneer party furnished by the division had reached the front line at 7 a.m., and owing to the rapid progress of 7th (Meerut) Division, was able at once to go forward to cut gaps and flag a path through the Turkish wire."

No mention is made of the 2/107th with the 60th Division.

Ala Singh simultaneously with the assaulting infantry, and they started to clear a passage through the enemy's wire before the front trench had been captured, coming under rifle and machine gun fire. Subadar Ala Singh led his party with marked coolness and was awarded the Military Cross. This Red track was soon completed, and the first gun crossed over it at 5.10 a.m.

The centre (White Road) party, under Captain Barker, was unfortunate in getting the Turkish barrage right on to it, which caused a number of casualties. A Turkish machine gun had escaped being "mopped up" by our infantry, and its fire was causing further casualties and delaying the work. Havildar Iman Din, in charge of one of the Pioneers' Lewis gun teams, took his gun along our front trench, crawled forward with it, fired a drum at the point where the Turkish gun was located, and silenced it. After this the work progressed without opposition, the Pioneers rounding up a few Turks in their second position.

No infantry attacked directly to the front of the Blue Road, so the start of the left party, under Captain Hickey, D.S.O., was a little delayed by a machine gun which kept on firing for some time after our infantry had passed beyond the enemy's front trenches, the Sappers with this party losing their officer before moving forward. The track, however, was got through well before it was required.

The casualties of this half battalion of the 2/107th Pioneers had been heavy, when compared with the generally light casualties amongst most other units during that day's fighting, and amounted to Jemadar Saidan Shah killed, Jemadar Naurang Khan wounded, and ninety-one men killed or wounded.

By 8 a.m. Lt.-Colonel Cunningham's half battalion had collected near the sea at the Nahr el Falig (three miles North of our original front line), where they rested and fed, whilst the ninety squadrons of the Desert Mounted Corps, over half of them carrying

lances, rode past them up the plain of Sharon on the way to their great exploits around and beyond Megiddo. Seeing this mass of cavalry advancing in battle array must have made some of the onlookers imagine that they were back in the days of the Crusades; and it may be that, owing to the progress of mechanization, never again will such a sight be seen!

At 10 a.m. this half battalion of the 2/107th, together with the 1st company Sappers and Miners, continued their eighteen miles march, mostly through heavy sand, to Tul Karm. This was one of the instances, noted by Lt.-Colonel Cunningham, when Indian Pioneer equipment enabling a tool to be carried on the man's back, would have been better than the British equipment, as throughout this trying march the men had to carry tools in their hands, as well as rifles. The mules also had a hard time, teams having to be doubled and in some cases trebled, to get the carts over bad patches. They arrived at Tul Karm in the evening, soon after it had been captured by the 60th Division. The XXI Corps, having completed their wheel, halted for the night, the left of the line then being at Tul Karm.

A little before midnight of the 19th/20th, Lt.-Col. Keelan's half battalion of the 121st Pioneers moved forward again to make a track for pack transport for one of the two columns of the 7th (Meerut) Division, which were to advance through the hills on the 20th to El Masudiye (the junction of the railways from Tul Karm and from Jenin to Nablus). Owing to the roughness of these hills, field artillery and wheeled transport had to be left behind in the plain. The Pioneers pushed the path forward in the dark over the hills, till at 4.0 a.m. on the 20th they reached a spot where they expected to meet an existing track leading to Kufr Sur, but though the C.O., his adjutant (Capt. Clark) and a Sapper officer searched around, they could not find it amongst the rocky hills, so the men lay down for a short rest. At dawn they were awakened by a shower of machine gun bullets but

no one was hit, and, the track having been discovered, on they went improving the rough path before the advancing 28th Brigade to Kufr Sur. Here a short halt was necessary, because the 19th Brigade was held up in front by the stout resistance put up by German troops. Some mountain guns, which had had a particularly long march, were hurriedly called up from where their mules were fighting for water at a well, having had none for 48 hours. These guns then assisted to clear out the enemy. The Pioneers continued their march, still improving the track, until 6 p.m., when they were rejoined by Major Greig's half battalion, which had been making paths for the other (21st Brigade) column of the 7th Division. The 121st Pioneers and the 3rd company Sappers and Miners finally completed the track through the hills via Beitlid, to El Masudiye by 4.30 p.m. on the 21st. Along this track had to come the 2,000 camels carrying water and rations for the 7th Division. The next day the Pioneers cleared the railway-station yard, the proceedings being enlivened by a Turkish ammunition dump catching fire.

Early on the morning of the 20th, the half battalion of the 2/107th, under Lt.-Col. Cunningham at Tul Karm, were personally congratulated by Major-General Shea, commanding the 60th Division, on their work during the previous day's battle. They then assisted the Sappers in making watering* arrangements for the division, the Turks having left very little water at Tul Karm. Amongst the captured rolling stock were nine trucks carrying water-tanks, and the Pioneers man-handled these four miles to Quqon, and then back again full of water to Kul Karm, thus enabling a captured engine to be put into use by the R.E. The brakes being faulty, drag-ropes had to be used to keep the trucks from running away down the inclines. A small party of Pioneers, under a British

* Lt.-Col. Cunningham noted that "In country such as this, where wells are the only source of water, a light pump would be a useful addition to Pioneer equipment. Pioneers could then the better assist other units to get water."

Officer, was detached for a few days as an escort to 4,000 Turkish prisoners. Meanwhile Major Cooper's two companies had been road-making in the hills and improving the water supply for the 3rd (Lahore) Division; they then marched northwards, via Tul Karm, to Quqon, at which place the other half battalion had previously arrived on the 23rd. The reunited 2/107th Pioneers then came under the orders of the C.R.E., XXI Corps, and were employed on road-making from Tul Karm northwards towards El Lajjun (Megiddo).

By the evening of the 20th September, the remains of the Turkish Eighth Army had been completely overwhelmed, and the Seventh Army were in full retreat through the hills towards exits already held by our cavalry, relentless bombing by our Air Force assisting in their destruction. Soon their Fourth Army was being pursued East of the Jordan by Chaytor's Force and worried by the Arabs, the greater part of this Army also being eventually captured.

Haifa was entered by the 5th Cavalry Division on the 23rd September, after a spirited attack by the Mysore and the Jodhpore Lancers. The 7th (Meerut) Division, less one brigade, was ordered to march there to relieve the cavalry, the 2nd Leicester being sent on ahead in lorries. On the 24th the 121st Pioneers marched to Quqon, for work under the C.R.E., XXI Corps, on the Haifa road, and on the 27th they marched to a point where work was required 13 miles along the road, but on arrival were ordered to rejoin the 7th Division as quickly as possible, so the Pioneers continued the march at once for a further 12 miles, without rations. The next day they caught up the 19th Brigade, and bivouacked for the night near the ruins of a Crusader's castle at Athlit, where the whole battalion enjoyed a bathe in the sea. The following morning (29th) the 121st, marching in front of the 19th Brigade, reached Haifa at 10.30 a.m.

In the meantime General Allenby had ordered the Desert Mounted Corps to continue their advance, and

after some fighting on the way and around the city, Damascus was entered by the advanced guard of the Australian 3rd Light Horse Brigade early on the 1st October.

On that date the 121st Pioneers, with the vanguard infantry of the 7th Division, commanded by Lt.-Col. Keelan, marched from Haifa along the sands to Acre. The next day the Pioneers improved the road for 12 miles farther along the coast to north of Zimmarin, bivouacking there from 2 a.m. to 6 a.m., the carcass of a dead horse making night odoriferous. Beyond this point at that time the road was impassable for field guns and wheeled transport, and there was no other road northwards for many miles inland, by which the division could advance. This part of the road from Acre to Tyre bends towards the shore and mounts the white cliffs of Ras el Naqura, this promontory being about 13 miles as the crow flies from Tyre. The path was barely six feet wide, in some places little more than a goat track, rocky and with gradients of one in five. The whole 14-mile stretch from Ras el Naqura to $6\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of Tyre is sometimes known as "The Ladder of Tyre," though this name really belongs particularly to a portion of rather over a mile in length beginning at Khan Iskanderune. Here the path was cut from solid rock in the shape of great steps, and ran along the face of steep cliffs, with a sheer drop to the sea. Most of these great steps were of marble, though some had been cut from other kinds of stone, and a few had been built up. There appeared to be a chance that blasting might cause the whole shelf of rock to slip into the sea, but Lt.-Colonel E. F. J. Hill, the C.R.E., 7th (Meerut) Division, decided to take the risk. The 3rd and 4th companies Sappers and Miners and the 121st Pioneers, assisted by the 2nd Leicester and 53rd Sikhs, got to work and within two and a half days the whole length of this cliff road was made passable for the guns, including a 60-pounder battery, and the wheeled transport of the 7th Division. The



ROAD-MAKING AT RAS-EL-NAQURA, NEAR THE LADDER OF TYRE.



A HALT OUTSIDE HAIFA. THE PIONEERS ARE WEARING STEEL HELMETS.

121ST PIONEERS IN PALESTINE.

conversion into a road of the stepped portion of the path—the actual Ladder of Tyre—had fallen to the lot of the 121st Pioneers.

A message dated the 6th October, 1918, was received by the C.R.E. from Major-General V. B. Fane, commanding the 7th (Meerut) Division, which read :

“My warmest congratulations to you and all ranks Sappers and Miners, and to Col. Keelan and all ranks 121st Pioneers for wonderful engineering skill, hard work and endurance displayed by you all. Your work has been the admiration of the whole division.”

The 121st Pioneers then marched with the advanced guard of the 7th Division, improving bad parts of the road as they went, along the coast through Tyre and Sidon to Beirut, where they arrived unopposed on the 10th October, French destroyers having entered the harbour shortly before their arrival. The troops were given a warm welcome by the inhabitants, who appeared to be genuinely glad to see them. Though tired after a long trek, the men marched through Beirut as if on a ceremonial parade, whilst flowers and scent were showered on them from the balconies and cigarettes were pressed into their hands, but the 121st were glad at last to reach their bivouac by the river on the north side of the town. On the 14th the advance northwards was continued, and two companies of the 121st, under Captain Ozanne, marching with the advanced guard, reached Tripoli on the 18th. Battalion Headquarters and the other two companies remained behind for road work, and following on later with Keelan's Group, arrived at Tripoli on the 27th.

The 2/107th Pioneers had finished their work on the Tul Karm-El Lajjun road on the 4th October, and arrived at Haifa on the 6th. Then marching through Acre, they worked from the 10th to 19th on still further improving the road over “The Ladder of Tyre,” getting one day off for field-firing and infantry training. Continuing their march, they arrived at

Nar Rukos, 3 miles S.E. of Beirut, on the 27th October.

On the 26th the Desert Mounted Corps had entered Aleppo, thus cutting the Turkish line of communication to Mesopotamia, and, almost exactly four years after Turkey's declaration of war, the armistice was signed on the 31st October, 1918. The Turkish army in Palestine had been nearly completely destroyed, with the loss of 75,000 prisoners, 360 guns and vast quantities of warlike stores, whilst since the opening of the battle on the 19th September, the British had advanced 360 miles. On the evening of the 11th November the news of the armistice with Germany was celebrated by the troops with a "feu-de-joie" and the discharge of Verey lights.

Shortly before the armistice the 121st Pioneers had received their blankets, coats and spare kit left behind at the commencement of the battle, as only a sparse amount of pack-transport had accompanied the battalion during the advance, the men having worked, marched and slept in their shirt-sleeves for over a month, with no change of clothing. Each man carrying a tool on his back, had enabled the 121st Pioneers to manage with the minimum of transport during the advance, and having the tools always with them, without having to wait for transport to come up, had proved most advantageous on many occasions. The Pioneers had worn "tin helmets" since the advance began, but after the armistice these were discarded for their usual and more becoming head-dress, the "puggri." In addition to these material comforts, the C.O.s* of both the 121st and 2/107th Pioneers soon afterwards received a message from Lt.-Gen. Sir L. J. Bols, Chief of the General Staff, E.E.F., which read: "The excellent work done by your battalion, as testified by the Chief Engineer, XXI Corps, has been brought to the notice of the Commander-in-Chief. He congratulates you and all ranks on this fine performance."

* Amongst the awards subsequently made to both battalions, Lt.-Col. Keelan and Lt.-Col. Cunningham received the D.S.O.

Both our battalions remained in Syria for over a year after the armistice. The 121st, with their headquarter camp by the sea shore at Ras-el-Lados, just outside Tripoli, were employed throughout the winter of 1918-19 on improving the Tripoli-Homs road, which was in a bad state of repair, and much used by supply lorries.

In January, 1919, a party of Mussalmans from Indian units was sent on a visit to Mecca, as the guests of the King of the Hedjaz. With the first batch of thirty men from the 121st went Subadar-Major Sardar Khan, Bahadur, who was subsequently placed in charge of the parties from all regiments, totalling some 2,000 men, and he received warm congratulations for the tactful manner he carried out this duty. The pilgrim-soldiers were treated with the utmost courtesy in Arabia, and they much appreciated being given this opportunity of seeing their Holy City.

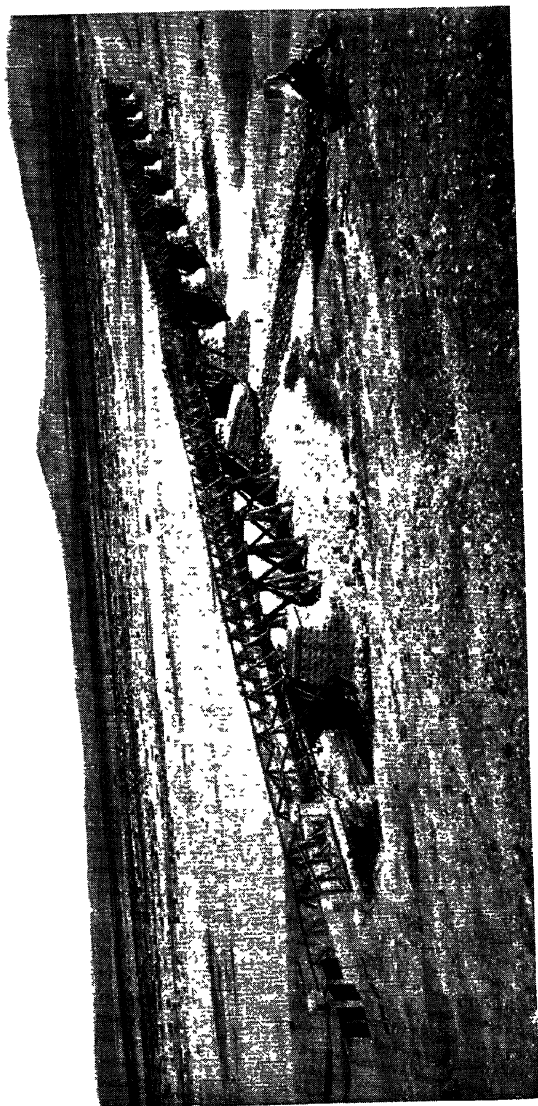
On the 19th March, the 19th Brigade, with whom the 121st were grouped, moved to Mejdelaya on the plateau above Tripoli for the hot season. On the 23rd June the battalion marched for Beirut, to which place came the wives of several British Officers. The 121st were then split up for several months by sending detachments to various places. Finally the 121st Pioneers moved to Haifa, thence by train to Qantara, and embarking at Suez on the 9th January, 1920, they sailed for India.

The 2/107th Pioneers, marching up the coastal road from Beirut, arrived at Khan Abdi, by the sea shore 8 miles N.E. of Tripoli, on the 5th November, 1918, where they found a camp already arranged for them by the 121st Pioneers. After working on the Tripoli-Homs road for over a month, they reached the latter place on the 23rd December. Here they came under the orders of the Desert Mounted Corps and were for a time the only dismounted unit in this northern area of Syria. Between Homs and Hama ninety-eight army lorries, carrying rations and Christmas fare to the Australians at Aleppo, got stuck fast

on about a mile stretch of low-lying road which had given way under their weight. The 2/107th turned out and spent most of Christmas-day in extricating these lorries, all of which were able to continue their journey that evening. The Pioneers were then employed on making diversions of the road beyond Hama round bridges blown up by the Turks during their retreat. On the 8th February two companies had to piquet the town of Hama, following an attack by Arabs on some British police. On the 17th the 2/107th entrained for Aleppo, where they camped near the Baghdad railway station. After this the battalion was scattered along a hundred miles of the road leading northwards from Aleppo, through Aintab, to Marash, to keep it open for traffic.

During April, when Marash was being threatened by bands of marauding Turks and Arabs, Lt.-Col. Cunningham was ordered to take two companies to repair a breach in the bridge over the Aksu river, between Aintab and Marash. This bridge was of timber with stone supports, about 400 yards long, and wide enough for two lorries to pass. One pier had been demolished and another tilted over, leaving an 84 ft. gap. The Pioneers had only material found on the spot to work with, but by narrowing part of the bridge the task was accomplished in twelve days, though they had been given six weeks in which to do it. The course of the river, flowing at five miles an hour, had to be diverted to flow past the sound piers by building a brushwood dam.

In May, 1919, the battalion moved into Aleppo and took over the guard duties in that city for a month, when they were relieved by the 34th Poona Horse and the 2/19th London Regiment. They then again worked on the road to Marash, making many small bridges and culverts. When Syria was handed over to the French, the 2/107th moved in November by train from Aleppo to Rayak, being involved in a collision on the way, in which one sepoy was killed. Companies were then distributed for road and railway



BRIDGE OVER THE AKSU RIVER, SYRIA.
Repaired by the 2nd Battalion 107th Pioneers.

work at and around Dar'a in Trans-Jordania, Samakh on the Sea of Galilee, El Affule and Haifa. In March, 1920, the battalion entrained at Jenin for Suez, where they embarked for India, and proceeded to Jhansi for disbandment. By August, 1920, the 2nd Battalion 107th Pioneers had ceased to exist.

Casualties during the Great War.

The total casualties of the battalions later known as The Bombay Pioneers during the operations narrated in Chapters IX to XIII are difficult to estimate accurately owing to drafts having been received from and sent to other regiments. The figures published at the time of the disbandment were "23 officers and nearly 1,000 Indian ranks killed, and 22 officers and approximately 2,800 Indian ranks wounded."

CHAPTER XIV

“ N.W. FRONTIER, INDIA, 1916-17 ”

“ BALUCHISTAN, 1918 ” “ AFGHANISTAN, 1919 ”

IT was the fate of the 12th* (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Pioneers to remain in India throughout the Great War, though this battalion sent many officers and large drafts of men as reinforcements to other battalions in France and Mesopotamia, notably one of its Sikh companies to the 34th Sikh Pioneers, which company† later became the nucleus for the re-formed 48th Pioneers. The 12th Pioneers also sent a machine-gun section, under Lieut. E. P. Yeates, to East Persia, a full account of whose adventures with General Dyer's force is given in Appendix 9.

In February, 1916, the 12th Pioneers proceeded from Quetta to Peshawar, where it formed part of the Peshawar Flying Column, commanded by Major J. S. Hooker, of the 12th, which carried out punitive operations against a section of the Mohmunds beyond Shabkadr. In October it was decided to institute the Mohmund Blockade, which was done by erecting a continuous barbed-wire entanglement, with a live electric wire running along its front, all the way from Kandi Kala on the Swat River canal to Michni, piquet

* The composition of the 12th Pioneers was two companies of Lobana Sikhs and two of Jats. † In 1914 the 12th Pioneers was commanded by Lt.-Col. W. C. Black, who before the end of the year left for a Staff appointment and later became a Major-General. He was succeeded by Major W. A. Campbell, who was invalided in Nov., 1916, the command devolving on Major J. S. Hooker.

† For services of this company of the 12th Pioneers, see pages 197, 259, and 281.

posts being established at about every 800 yards along this line. The 12th Pioneers was one of the five battalions, under the command of Brig.-General L. S. Dunsterville, employed for some months on this Blockade. The Mohmunds having been brought to a more reasonable frame of mind, the 12th Pioneers were moved early in April, 1917, to Lahore.

Measures had to be taken during this year to deal with the Mahsuds of Waziristan, who had been indulging in one of their recurring epidemics of raiding, and both the 12th and the 107th Pioneers took part in this little frontier campaign, but matters were not so serious as they became later in 1919-20. It should be remembered that in 1917 no roads existed in Waziristan, transport having to march either up the river beds or across the very rough country. The 12th Pioneers spent only six weeks in Lahore and then joined the North Waziristan Field Force, commanded by Brig.-General the Hon. S. G. Bruce, with which they worked on making perimeter camps, roads and wells at and around Saidgi, Miranshah and Idak in the Tochi valley. They returned to Lahore in September. The 107th Pioneers, who had arrived at Quetta in October, 1916, from Mesopotamia, were ordered to Southern Waziristan in April, 1917. They were told to leave their trans-frontier Pathans behind at Quetta, but being under strength they were eventually allowed to take them. The Pathan companies of the 107th, 121st and 128th Pioneers were composed mainly of cis-frontier Yusafzais, but had usually about a platoon of trans-frontier men, and the 121st Pioneers on going to Mesopotamia had transferred all their trans-frontier Pathans to the 107th. The Pathans* serving with Pioneers in France, Mesopotamia, the

* Some drafts of Pathans were sent from our battalions to other units in East Africa, where they did good service. British Officers who went to East Africa were Major G. C. Denton, 12th Pioneers., who was killed on the 9th October, 1916, when with the Jind I.S. Infantry; Major A. C. Gover, 121st Pioneers, who was severely wounded when with the 129th Baluchistan Infantry and received the M.C.; and Major G. C. Cooper, 121st Pioneers, who was awarded the M.C. and Croix de Guerre for his services with the 61st Pioneers.

Frontier and elsewhere did excellent service and proved thoroughly reliable. The 107th Pioneers proceeded to Murtaza and other posts up the Gomul, where the flooded river caused a deal of trouble. They then marched with a Column, via Kajuri Kach, towards Sawakai, the battalion piqueting the hills. Later the 107th marched across country from Murtaza to Khirgi, to assist in the advance up the Takki Zam. The Pioneers made a track from Khirgi to Jandola well above the level of the spates, which constantly destroyed any work done in the river bed. They also did a good deal of infantry work, including a rear guard action. In November the 107th Pioneers returned to Quetta.

Early in the following year a tribe in Baluchistan, named the Marri, best known by their flowing beards and long locks of hair reaching to below the waist, became excited by the general unrest and propaganda and broke out into rebellion. They attacked the Political Agent in Gumbaz Fort, burnt a station on the Harnai loop-line to Quetta, and committed other outrages. Another tribe—the Katrani—then joined in and burnt Fort Monroe. The Marri Field Force had to be hastily organized, which consisted of two columns, one based on Quetta from Hurnai and the other based on Dera Ghazi Khan on the Indus, to deal with the Marri and Katrani respectively. To join this force, the 12th Pioneers were ordered from Lahore to Dera Ghazi Khan, which they reached on the 9th March, 1918, and the 107th Pioneers were sent from Quetta to Hurnai, the leading company arriving there on the 23rd February.

With the exception of one fight in which the Marri were quickly defeated by the 1st South Lancashire and the 2/2nd Gurkhas, the rebels put up little resistance; but the absence of roads in this hilly country, the scarcity of water, and a climate which changes from burning heat by day to bitter cold at night, provided plenty of hardships for the troops. The 12th Pioneers, commanded by Lt.-Colonel J. S. Hooker,

were employed mostly on making tracks, but occasionally companies were sent out with small punitive columns. On the 3rd/4th April, a mixed force, commanded by Capt. A. K. Macpherson, the Adjutant of the 12th Pioneers, destroyed several villages in the Katrani country. The 107th Pioneers, under Major W. P. M. D. McLaughlin, were at first split up into companies holding various posts and piqueting the road by day between Harnai and Ashgara. On one night Capt. B. H. Wallis' company camp at Torkhan was surrounded by a Marri "lashkar," who were soon driven off, the garrison having one man wounded. On the 17th March a column consisting of the 1st South Lancashire, the 2/2nd Gurkhas and the 107th Pioneers, set out from Gumbaz to march through the Marri country. Rebel "lashkars" were seen in the hills and there was a little sniping, but the tribesmen would not stand to fight. The Pioneers had to do a good deal of punitive work, destroying villages, cutting crops and rounding up flocks of sheep. Amongst other road-making, the 107th cut a camel track over a pass which crosses the Sulaiman range at a height of nearly ten thousand feet. The tribesmen having accepted the peace terms imposed on them, the Marri Field Force dispersed, the 12th Pioneers arriving at Nowshera on the 6th, and the 107th Pioneers at Quetta on the 17th May, 1918.

In October, the 107th Pioneers, commanded by Major W. P. M. D. McLaughlin, were ordered to leave Quetta for the East Persian Cordon,* where much road making was urgently required to enable motor convoys to supply the posts along the six hundred miles from rail-head at Duzdab, through Birjand, to Meshed, and then onwards to supply the small force under General Malleon operating against the Bolsheviks round about the Trans-Caspian railway from Krasnovodsk, through Askhabad, to Merv. At the time the 107th joined the East Persian Cordon,

* The reasons for the formation of the East Persian Cordon have been referred to on page 303. Also see page 175.

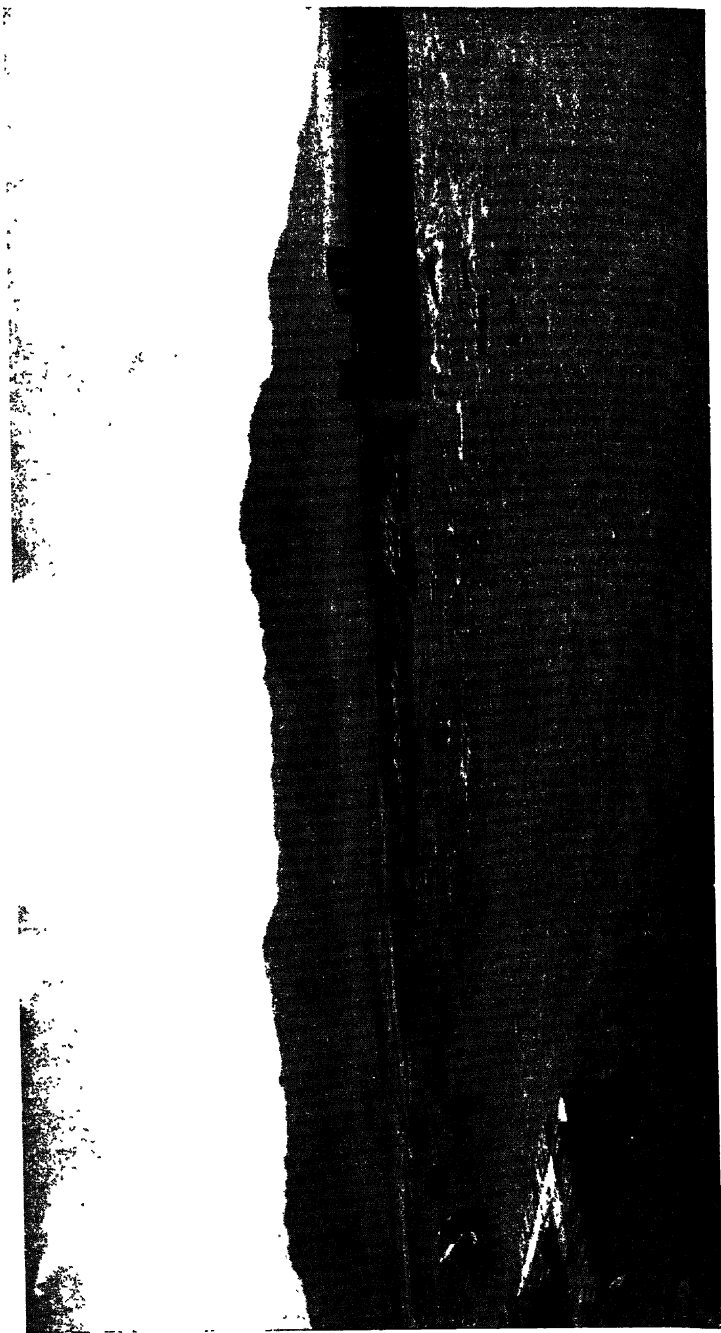
the Quetta-Nushki railway extension to Duzdab, just beyond the Baluchistan-Persian border, was not quite completed, so the Pioneers had a $2\frac{1}{2}$ days' march from the railhead to that place. They at once started to make a road passable by motors from Duzdab to Harmukh, i.e. along the first of the seven sections of the line of communication. Brig.-General W. E. R. Dickson, Inspector General of Communications in East Persia, wrote of this road in his book "East Persia," that it was

"A fine piece of rapid road-making and, like all the work done by the 107th Pioneers in East Persia, of excellent quality. Two low passes were crossed, and as the ground was hard no metalling was needed, except a short piece on the Duzdab plain. A mechanical transport officer described this portion of the road made by the Pioneers as a 'Brooklands track.'"

The 107th then moved on and worked on various sections of the road to Birjand and Meshed. They also built mud huts for the troops at several posts; there being no other material available, the men learnt to make with sun-dried mud bricks the domed roofs, called "gumbaz," which are commonly used in Persia.

The troops in East Persia had to endure many hardships, one of the worst being the "bad-i-sad-o-bist roz," or the wind of 120 days. This wind blows from May to August so strongly that an effort is needed to stand upright in it, the heat is like a blast from a furnace, and the atmosphere is darkened like a fog by the driven sand. The Persian houses were infested by a noxious insect which caused a form of relapsing fever, and one company of the 107th suffered severely by taking shelter in a "serai" on one cold night.

Lt.-Colonel W. W. Bickford took over command of 107th Pioneers from Major McLaughlin in February, 1919, the latter officer soon afterwards having to go home on sick-leave. Major McLaughlin had never properly recovered from the wound he received in France in 1914, and the hardships he had cheerfully



BIRJAND.

Reproduced from "East Persia," by Brig.-General W. E. R. Dickson.

(*Edward Arnold & Co.*)

faced in the Marri campaign and in East Persia had caused this wound to give trouble. He died in England in November. We must now leave the 107th Pioneers for a while and turn to other events.

During the later part of the Great War period numerous new Indian battalions were raised, some of which were given new numbers, such as the 1st and 2nd Bns. 155th Pioneers, whilst others were formed as extra battalions of existing units. Amongst the latter were the following battalions :—

THE 2ND BN. 12TH PIONEERS was raised at Lahore on the 2nd June, 1917, by Major W. C. W. Hawkes, D.S.O., of the 106th Hazara Pioneers. Composition : Hazaras, Sikhs, Jats and Ahirs. Its service in the 3rd Afghan War is recounted a little further on in this Chapter.

THE 2ND BN. 48TH PIONEERS was formed at Arangaon on the 12th July, 1918, by Major G. Hewett, D.S.O., 48th Pioneers. Composition : Lobana and Saini Sikhs, Jats and Heris. This battalion was only just fit for service when general demobilization commenced, and it had almost disappeared when orders were received to stand fast for the 3rd Afghan War. Its demobilization, however, had been carried out so promptly that it had gone too far for the battalion to be quickly reformed. Its disbandment, therefore, was completed.

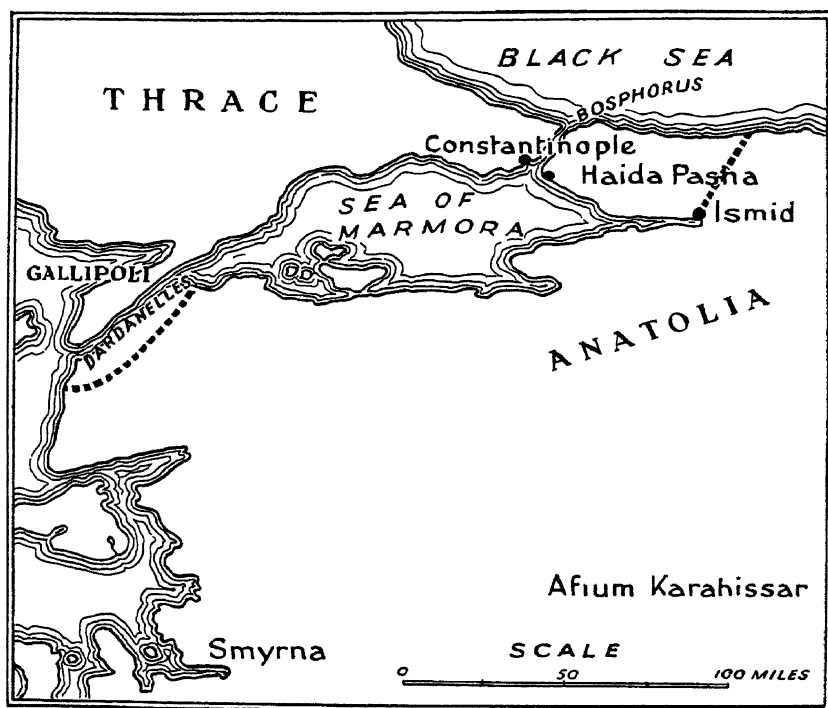
THE 2ND BN. 107TH PIONEERS, of whose career and service in Palestine an account has been given in Chapter XIII.

THE 2ND BN. 128TH PIONEERS was raised at Arangaon on the 28th February, 1918, under the command of Major H. W. Ashburner, D.S.O., 106th Hazara Pioneers. Its composition was mixed, comprising Yusufzai Pathans, Lobana and Saini Sikhs, Western Jats, Deccani and Konkani Mahrattas and Rajputana Mussalmans. Lt.-Colonel W. L. S. Meiklejohn, of the 106th, relieved Major Ashburner in September, 1918, and was followed in May, 1921, by Major H. W. Tobin, D.S.O., O.B.E., of the 1st Bn. 128th Pioneers.

The seconds-in-command were successively Major I. Ferrier, 48th Pioneers, and Major J. A. Story, 61st Pioneers. Captain C. L. Penn was Adjutant and Subadar Khushal Khan, a sporting Yusufzai from the 1st/128th, was the Subadar-Major.

In the late autumn of 1918, the battalion was pronounced fit for service; and in February, 1920, it

PART OF TURKEY



Allies outposts represented by dotted lines.

was sent on strike duty to Bombay, where it camped in the Zoological Gardens, on account of trouble among the cotton mill hands, which had been fomented by agitators and had become serious. Officers and men had unpleasant experiences of that most trying of a soldier's duties, action in aid of the Civil Power.

After being placed under orders for East Persia, which were cancelled, the 2/128th sailed from Bombay

in March, 1920, to join the Army of the Black Sea. Trans-shipping in Egypt, they arrived off Constantinople on the 3rd May and disembarked at Haider Pasha, the western terminus of the Baghdad railway on the Asiatic coast. They were split up into detachments, one company crossing over the Bosphorus to Mashlaq, a few miles North of Pera in Turkey in Europe, whilst the other three went to the vicinity of Ismid and Pavlo on the Gulf of Ismid, where they were allotted to what may be loosely termed outpost duty.

At this period, eighteen months after the armistice with Turkey, the final terms of peace were still under discussion; hence the continued presence of the British and French troops, which, joined by the Italians, became the "Allied Army of Occupation," supported by the British Mediterranean Fleet, together with an odd lot of American and other allied warships. The situation was extremely complicated by many conflicting factors. The Turkish local administrations were functioning only in name and bands of brigands infested the countryside, not only in Anatolia but also, to some extent, West of the Bosphorus. This was largely due to the fact that the nominal rule of the Sultan was being challenged by Mustapha Kemal, and in June, 1920, the Kemalists drove the Sultan's ragged troops back across our outpost line on the Ismid peninsula, behind which they took refuge. The revolutionaries attacked the Allied posts, and three companies of the 2/128th were engaged against them. The Greeks, who had reason to believe that they had the sympathy and support of the British Government, then landed at Smyrna and advanced towards Angora, which had the effect of causing a great number of Turks to flock to Mustapha Kemal's standards. The Kemalists had managed to obtain considerable quantities of war material, partly through the French inside south-eastern Anatolia. Finally the Greek armies were routed at the battle of the Sakaria and were driven from the country. While all this was going on,

it was the rôle of the Allied Army of Occupation to "keep the ring," whilst Turk and Greek fought it out, and the 2/128th occasionally watched fighting in progress across the narrow Gulf of Ismid. The Pioneers participated in the maintenance of peace and order on the Peninsula, and this involved chasing brigands* and rounding up arms. It was significant of the confidence placed by the inhabitants on British Officers that one of the company commanders of the 2/128th Pioneers was elected in a small Turkish town to be its Mayor.

Despite the disturbed state of the countryside, training was carried on, and in rifle shooting the battalion proved itself to be the best unit in the force. Although hard worked, the officers availed themselves of the varied opportunities for sport. There were packs of hounds on both sides of the Bosphorus, that in Europe having been looked after for us by the Turks throughout the War. The British officers of the battalion hunted regularly, and in one open point-to-point race every one of them competed. They also had a good deal of small game shooting, mostly in the ex-Sultan's preserves. The Pioneers were on the best of terms with the Navy, and at a Fleet regatta on the Sea of Marmora, the 2nd 128th won a sternly contested race, the C.O. rowing at stroke.

In May, 1922, all the four Indian battalions were relieved, on grounds of political expediency, by British troops. The Commander-in-Chief, Sir Charles Harington, and the Divisional Commander in their valedictory orders highly complimented the 2nd Battalion 128th Pioneers on their efficiency. After trans-shipping in Egypt, the battalion was sent to Lucknow, where its disbandment was carried out by Major Story, who completed it by the close of 1922.

The Depôts left behind in India by each battalion proceeding on field service had done indispensable work throughout the War. Mobilization Regulations

* Captain F. H. Mellor, who served with the 2/128th Pioneers, gives entertaining details of the battalion's adventures in his book "Sword and Spear." (Selwyn & Blount Ltd.)



THE 2ND BATTALION 128TH PIONEERS IN TURKEY.

Reproduced from *Sword and Spear* by Capt. F. H. Mellor. (*Selwyn & Blount*).

had laid down an inadequate staff to deal with the work at a depôt during war on a grand scale, and a recently introduced system of keeping field accounts was unsuitable for its purpose, so the unfortunate officers left behind in command of depôts at first had a difficult task. Their work was to send out recruiting parties and to train recruits and newly joined young officers; to despatch drafts to their own and to other battalions; to receive men discharged as fit from hospitals and to invalid out the permanently unfit; to keep the field accounts and to send remittances to the men's families; to wind up the estates of deceased officers and others; and at the same time to cope with an avalanche of inspecting officers of various kinds. In addition to other distractions, the depôts were occasionally moved from one station to another. These moves gave rise to the "canard" that there was a shortage of accommodation for one unit, and it was therefore essential for depôts to be shifted so frequently that one of them would always be accommodated in a troop train.

Many pensioned Indian Officers volunteered to be re-employed, some doing good work at the depôts and others helping with recruiting. Amongst the first to offer his services was Subadar-Major Surja, a pensioner of the 48th Pioneers; he was made responsible for recruiting Jats, supplying these both to the Pioneers and to the Jat Regiments, and through his energy Jats were never lacking.

As the war progressed all the depôts grew to a large size, for instance in September, 1918, the strength of the Depôt 121st Pioneers stood at 10 British Officers and 1,849 other ranks, and this one depôt enlisted and trained 4,329 recruits during the war, the other depôts doing work on a similar scale. Had there been one Training Battalion, instead of separate depôts for each of our battalions and the 2nd battalions, it would have been a huge unit!

Early in 1919 demobilization was well under way in India, though 124 Indian battalions and 89

squadrons were still overseas. Of the British units in India a large number of men had already left for England, whilst many of the remainder, who had enlisted for the duration of the war, were clamouring to get home. The last thing the Indian Government or the troops wanted at the moment was another war, nevertheless, on the 6th May, the Government was forced to order general mobilization for war with Afghanistan.

Throughout the Great War the Amir Habibulla had abided loyally by his engagements with the Indian Government and had kept Afghanistan neutral, despite the efforts of German and Turkish agents and a strong party of his own people to force him to come in on the side of our enemies. In February, 1919, the Amir Habibulla was murdered, and was succeeded by Amanulla. The new Amir soon began to make secret preparations for an invasion of India, and plotted with the revolutionary party in India for support. Copies of a proclamation signed by the Amir were distributed by the Postmaster of Peshawar, calling on all Mohammedans to aid Afghanistan in a war against the Infidels. Violent riots occurred along the railway from Bombay to Peshawar during April, and there were other outbreaks at Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Delhi and elsewhere, but these were soon quelled with heavy casualties, especially at Amritsar. Meanwhile Afghan troops were massing near the frontier, and on the 3rd May parties of them began to cross into British territory, thus commencing the 3rd Afghan War.

Cordon Troops.

2 sqdns. 41st Cavalry.
1½ Bns. 98th Infantry.
2 Coys. 120th Infantry.
107th Pioneers.
1 Coy. 3rd Sappers and Miners.

Reinforcement on outbreak of war.

Kashmir Mountain Battery.
1 Bn. Kapurthala Infantry.
Trans-Caspia Force.
28th Cavalry.
19th Punjabis.

A hostile Afghanistan made the situation of the few troops on the East Persian Cordon, strung out along the 600 miles of the western frontier of Afghanistan, none too happy, as there was the possibility of them being

attacked by the Afghans from the direction of Herat* or Siestan, and by the Bolsheviks from Trans-Caspia. By this time the road had been completed, and companies of the 107th Pioneers were distributed at various posts along the road with the duty of maintaining and improving it. On the outbreak of war the 107th Pioneers were concentrated and ordered to march to Rui Khaf (near the Afghan border, facing Herat), where, with one squadron of the 41st Cavalry and a section of the Kashmir Mountain Battery, they formed what was known as "Bickforce," under the command of Lt.-Colonel Bickford, C.I.E., D.S.O., the commandant of the 107th. Another small striking force was formed at the southern end of the line facing Siestan. General Dickson wrote of "Bickforce" that: "They seemed but a wee body compared with the numbers which our intelligence reported at Herat on the other side, but they were composed of fine material and would certainly have given a good account of themselves had the occasion arisen for them to do so. The Afghans did not, however, venture to try conclusions with them, thereby no doubt showing their wisdom." The 107th Pioneers† finally returned to Quetta from East Persia on the 7th November, 1920.

Troops from Quetta were concentrated at Chaman by the 26th May, 1919, and they then stormed the small Afghan fort of Spin Baldak, killing or capturing most of the garrison. Nothing much further occurred on this Southern front until after the armistice, except fighting with tribesmen in the Zhob. It then appeared that it might be necessary to attack an Afghan force in the vicinity of Spin Baldak, which was violating the terms of the armistice, and, to set more troops free for this purpose, a company formed by the Depôt of the 107th Pioneers at Quetta was sent up in July to perform security duties on the railway from Quetta to Chaman.

* *Vide* Map No. 4.

† Captains B. H. Wallis, M.C., and F. H. F. Hornor, M.C., had been almost continuously with the 107th Pioneers during its service in France, Mesopotamia, the Frontier, Baluchistan and E. Persia.

On the Central front the Afghans took the offensive, General Nadir Khan (who later became Amir of Afghanistan) invading the Kurram valley and investing Thal. This force, however, rapidly retired into Afghanistan on the approach of a relieving force under General Dyer. In Waziristan mutinies had occurred amongst the Militia, and many posts were evacuated.

Two of our battalions served on the Northern front. The 1st Bn. 12th (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Pioneers, commanded by Lt.-Colonel J. S. Hooker, mobilized at Nowshera on the 5th May, 1919, and entrained for Jamrud, then the rail-head at the mouth of the Khyber Pass. The 2nd Bn. 12th Pioneers, under Major (T/Lt.-Col.) G. A. Clarke,* was split up into detachments along the railway in connection with the recent Punjab disturbances, but the battalion was quickly concentrated at Lahore and arrived at Jamrud on the 8th May. Here both the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 12th Pioneers were employed for a few days on making platforms for the uncompleted rail-head, levelling ground for supply dumps and preparing camps. The 1st Battalion had been allotted to the Divisional Troops of the 1st Division, and the 2nd Battalion to the Corps Troops of the N.W. Frontier Force.

An Afghan force had crossed the frontier and taken up a position on the hills above Bagh, about two miles from Landi Kotal at the top of the Khyber Pass, from which position they were driven headlong on the 11th May, with the loss of several guns. So demoralized were the Afghans after this defeat that it was decided to advance at once with the small force available to seize the Afghan town of Dakka, which was occupied on the 13th, without opposition. The 1st Division was then concentrated there to prepare for an advance on Jalalabad and Kabul, and troops sent out on reconnaissances had some fighting with the Afghans. The 1/12th Pioneers arrived at Dakka on the 29th May, having been employed on improving

* Officiating as C.O. until Lt.-Col. C. W. Neumann joined in the Khyber.

the road to that place from where it crosses the frontier. When all was ready for the advance to continue the Amir asked for an armistice, which was granted on the 3rd June, one of the conditions being that our troops should remain in Afghanistan until the peace terms had been arranged. The 1/12th then improved the road forward towards Jalalabad, doubling it over the Khurd-Khyber Pass.

The 2nd Bn. 12th Pioneers meanwhile had been working on the road and watering arrangements in the Khyber. They had occasionally piqueted the route and had some skirmishing with tribesmen, the Pioneers having one man wounded. Cholera suddenly broke out in the Pass during June, the 2/12th having some 40 cases, of whom 23 died, but following inoculation the epidemic abated. The temperature in the Khyber at this time inside the tents varied from 114 to 123 degrees Fahrenheit during the daytime, so the 2/12th were glad to get out of this sweltering Pass and to arrive at Dakka on the 7th July, where they camped alongside their 1st Battalion.

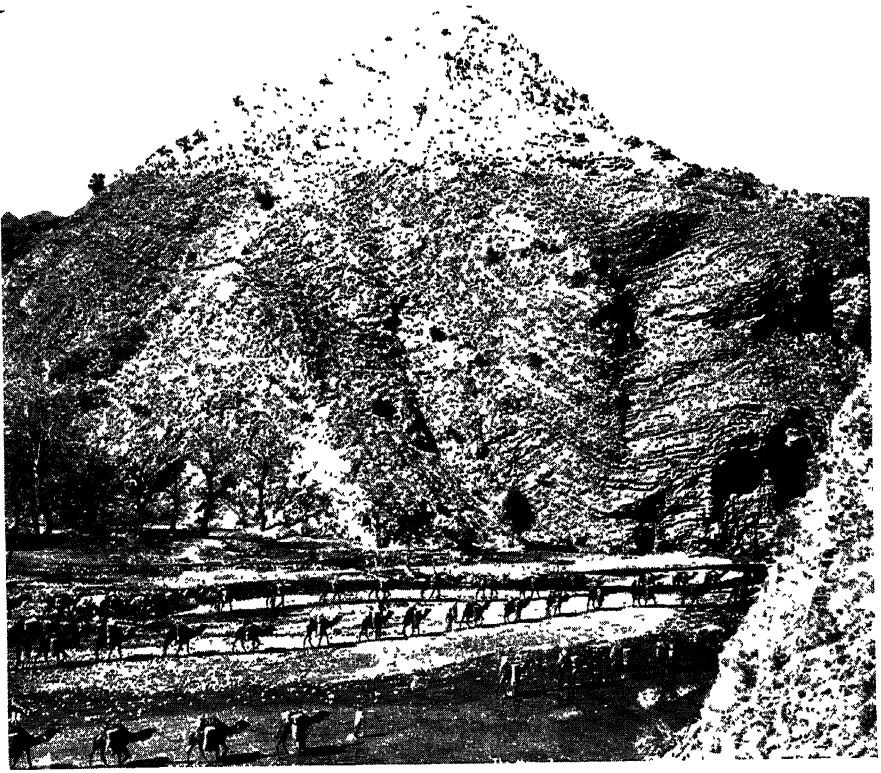
Peace was declared with Afghanistan on the 9th September, 1919, and our troops were speedily withdrawn from that country, the 1/12th Pioneers going to Nowshera and the 2/12th to Landi Kotal. The 2nd Battalion 12th Pioneers remained in the Khyber Pass for the next two years, employed on various engineering work, chiefly road-making, and during the last few months they assisted in the construction of the Khyber railway. In October, 1921, they left Jamrud for Ambala, where their disbandment was completed on the 24th December.

During and after the 3rd Afghan War the tribes in Waziristan had given a deal of trouble, the Mahsuds alone having carried out over one hundred raids, so in December, 1919, a force moved up the Takki Zam to deal with them. After severe fighting and the heaviest casualties so far experienced in frontier warfare, the Mahsuds were more or less subdued, and it was decided to remain in permanent occupation

of Waziristan. None of our battalions were involved in this campaign, but Major T. M. O. Catterson-Smith, 12th Kelat-i-Ghilzie Pioneers, was mortally wounded on the 10th February, 1920, whilst serving with the 3/34th Sikh Pioneers, during the stout fight that battalion put up at Pioneer Piquet. For his valour he was awarded a posthumous D.S.O. Captain M. P. Pratt, 121st Pioneers, who was still suffering from the effects of the wound received in Mesopotamia, died at Khirgi in April, 1920, whilst in command of a Labour Corps. At the end of 1920 a column operating against the Wazirs occupied Wana.

At about this time both the 48th and the 121st Pioneers were ordered to Waziristan. The 121st, who had returned from Palestine to Kirkee in February, 1920, entrained for Tank on the 1st October, under the command of Major F. E. W. Baldwin.* They started under strength, as many of the men had not completed the furlough granted to them on returning from field service. From Tank the 121st Pioneers marched up the Takki Zam, through the barren hill country around Jandola and Kotkai, to the more pleasant climate and surroundings at Ladha, where the hills are covered with holm oak and other shrubs. They arrived at Ladha on the 15th October, and on the 25th the Bn. H.Q. and 2 companies returned to the next perimeter camp at Sararogha, leaving the other 2 companies, under Major A. C. Gover, M.C., at Ladha. The route for both motor and camel transport to these camps consisted of tracks made along the stoney bed of the Takki Zam, and that stream was so winding that it had to be waded an astonishing number of times. From both these camps the 121st worked on keeping the track open, though it was frequently washed away. They also built a number of permanent piquet posts situated on dominating features to protect the route. On the 21st January,

* The command of the 121st later devolved on Major Gover, M.C., and then on Major A. T. Sheringham, D.S.O., till on the 29th April, 1921, Lt.-Col. A. C. S. B. Ellis arrived on transfer back to his old battalion, after having been Commandant of the 128th Pioneers for a short time.



WAZIRISTAN.

R. B. Holmes, Peshawar

The Takki Zam flowing through the Ahnai Tangi.

1921, a party of the 121st Pioneers, whilst working near Sararogha, were fired on by some Mahsuds, 5 men of the Jat Company being wounded.

The 48th Pioneers had arrived at Jhansi from Mesopotamia in January, 1920, and in the autumn all ranks were recalled from furlough, and the battalion, under the command of Colonel R. J. Cuming, D.S.O., O.B.E.,* was mobilized for service in Waziristan. They reached Khirgi on the 13th December, 1920, and Jandola on the 2nd January, 1921. On the 4th January, two companies moved out of Jandola to construct a motor track on the far side of the ridge on which Titch Piquet was situated, two platoons of the 28th Punjabis, under an Indian Officer, and some Badrogas (i.e. armed friendly tribesmen) providing the covering party. At about 11.30 a.m. a strong party of Wazirs delivered a sudden attack, the Badrogas promptly bolted and the small party of infantry were unable to hold up the attack. The Pioneers came under a hot fire whilst still working and lost several men before they could get into positions to open fire. Their withdrawal to Jandola was assisted by a company of the 82nd Punjabis, who covered their right flank. Captain J. S. F. Hodson was awarded the M.C. for carrying in a wounded man under heavy fire, and Havildar Rur Singh earned the I.O.M. Lieut. Cotton, who had been firing at the enemy from a nulla with his revolver, dashed out with a sepoy and brought in a wounded man who had fallen about 30 yards from the edge of the nulla. One sepoy, wounded in both legs, could not be got away. He begged to be left his rifle and was given extra ammunition by another wounded man. Next day his dead body was found, with a pile of empty cases by its side. The casualties of the 48th Pioneers amounted to 8 killed, Capt. Hodson, Lieut. and Adj. Jennings, one Indian Officer and 31 men wounded. The enemy later admitted to a loss of 16 killed.

Col. Cuming was invalided in April, 1921, when Major G. Hewett, D.S.O., took over command, with Major H. G. Maturin, O.B.E., as second-in-command.

The 48th (less one company with the Wana Column and one at Jandola) then moved up to Kotkai, where it was employed in keeping the track up the Takki Zam fit for motor traffic, a task which became difficult in the spate season, especially in the Ahnai Tangi. They also built several piquets, being occasionally sniped whilst at work. Sudden disaster met a party from the company with the Wana Column on the 21st October, whilst returning through the treacherous Shahur Tangi, after removing the "chapper" roofs from some piquet posts above the gorge. They were caught by a spate, which came roaring down the narrow defile like a moving wall of water, and 13 of the party were drowned. Some of the men became isolated on a small island, which was rapidly disappearing, and Havildar Rur Singh, who was in command, by his coolness and daring managed to save the lives of several of his men, though himself almost overwhelmed in the swirling flood. He was awarded the high distinction of the Albert Medal. The 48th Pioneers left Waziristan at the end of May, 1922, and proceeded to Kirkee.

Orders were received in March, 1921, for the reorganization of the 121st Pioneers as a Training Battalion (called 10th Bn.) to a 2nd Group of Indian Pioneers, to be named the 2nd Bombay Pioneers, the formation of which has already been described in Chapter II. In addition to the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th Bns., formerly called the 107th, 12th, 128th and 48th Pioneers respectively, the 2/128th Pioneers were to be temporarily attached to the Group until it returned from Constantinople for disbandment. This order could not be put into effect whilst the 121st Pioneers were still serving in Waziristan, nor could the 12th Pioneers reorganize until they returned from fighting the Arab insurgents in Mesopotamia, of which more anon. The 121st Pioneers finally left Waziristan on the 9th March, 1920, receiving a most complimentary* farewell letter from Major-General

* The 121st Prs. received 12 Mentions in Despatches for Waziristan, Lt.-Col. A. C. Ellis receiving the C.B.E.

Sir T. S. Matheson, commanding Wazirforce, and on arrival at Agra, Lt.-Colonel Ellis and his officers immediately got down to converting the 121st into a Training Battalion. Under the new organization each of the four active battalions was to consist of three companies, instead of the former four, composed of Lobana Sikhs, Mahrattas and Meos respectively, which unfortunately meant mustering out the Pathans and Jats. It was with great regret that the Bombay Pioneers said good-bye to these splendid soldiers, both the steady Jat and the more volatile Pathan having performed yeoman service in many campaigns. On becoming the Training Battalion, the 121st Pioneers received back their old title and were called the 10th Battalion 2nd Bombay Pioneers (Marine Battalion) and the 12th Pioneers on becoming the 2nd Bn. retained their distinction of "Kelat-i-Ghilzie." At first it seemed rather a strange metamorphosis to the two battalions originally known as Bengal Infantry to find themselves labelled Bombay.

It had always been the custom, the reason for which is unknown, for Pioneers not to possess Colours, and on being converted into Pioneers all our battalions had to lay up their Colours. The 12th Pioneers, however, soon after becoming the 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion 2nd Bombay Pioneers were granted* the privilege of again carrying their special Kelat-i-Ghilzie Colour. On their return from Iraq this Colour was carried for the first time since they had become Pioneers by a Guard of Honour for the Commander-in-Chief, General Lord Rawlinson of Trent, at Meerut in February, 1925. After this the 2nd Battalion always carried the Kelat-i-Ghilzie Colour on ceremonial parades, and they were the only regiment of Pioneers ever to carry a Colour.

After the armistice with Turkey and the subduing of the Kurdish revolt, it appeared that Britain could

* Sanctioned by Indian Army Order No. 96 of 1924. For the grant of the Kelat-i-Ghilzie Colour see page 21. An account of the Colours of all the battalions is given in Appendix 3.

carry on peacefully with the civil administration of Mesopotamia, and the garrison of that country had been suitably reduced. The Arab tribes, however, had other ideas, and evidently did not appreciate our efforts to introduce an efficient system of government. In 1920 insurrection broke out, some scattered garrisons were surrounded, a column of British troops was cut up, political officers were murdered, and the whole country was soon in a turmoil. Lt.-General Sir A. L. Haldane, commanding in Mesopotamia, had to ask for reinforcements, and amongst the troops despatched were the 12th (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Pioneers. The regiment, under Major R. B. Boyce, left Nowshera on the 9th August, 1920, arrived at Basra on the 17th, and on the same night trans-shipped into barges, losing one man by drowning in the process, and were towed up to Kut.

The battalion first built block-houses along the line from Kut to Baghdad, and then proceeded to Baquba, whence detachments were sent out with two columns operating against the insurgents. A little later the 12th moved to Hilla on the Euphrates, and in operations around that town had three men wounded. Afterwards the battalion formed part of various columns engaged in dispersing the Arabs, destroying the villages of certain sheikhs, and rounding up flocks, during which they had a few casualties. The Pioneers also did a lot of work* on repairing railways damaged by the insurgents, road-making and constructing blockhouses. After the insurrection had been suppressed, the 12th Pioneers moved to Baghdad in February, 1921, and in September to Sharqat, where they remained throughout the year 1922, being employed on road-making and supplying escorts to convoys going to Mosul. One company

* Message from 17th Division to 12th Pioneers :—"The Divisional Commander wishes to thank all ranks most heartily for the excellent work they have done since their arrival in Mesopotamia. They have left their mark wherever they have been in the shape of blockhouses, roads, railways and demolished towers; without their help the results gained by the Division could hardly have been achieved. The Division were fortunate to get such a good Battalion."



WADI JAHANNUM BRIDGE, IRAQ.

Built in 1923 by 2nd (K.I.G.) Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers.



RECRUITS AND TRAINED MEN AT THE TRAINING BATTALION, AGRA, 1925.

L. to R. Mahrattas, Sikhs, Meos.

constructed a concrete girder bridge across the 90 ft. wide and 60 ft. deep Wadi Jehannum. In the meantime the 12th Pioneers had become the 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers, but had to postpone full reorganization until its return to India.

The 1st Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers (formerly 107th), under the command of Colonel R. D. Marjoribanks,* arrived at Basra on the 18th January, 1923, and entrained for Sharqat, where they expected at once to relieve the 2nd Battalion. Both battalions, however, were retained in Iraq (as Mesopotamia was now called), as, owing to strained relations with Turkey, war appeared to be imminent, and both battalions were put on to making a motor road from Sharqat to Mosul. Owing to the likelihood of hostilities, the 1st Battalion was issued with Lewis guns on the scale of an infantry battalion, instead of only the six guns to which they had been reduced† by the recent reorganization. They were pleased to be so soon again fully armed with these weapons, though they still regretted being deprived of their Vickers guns. As the 1st Bn. had been ordered to leave their Pioneer equipment in India and to take over that of the 2nd Bn. in Iraq, they were somewhat hampered by lack of tools until the departure of the latter unit. The trouble with the Turks having been settled, the 2nd Battalion sailed from Basra on the 26th May, 1923, and proceeded to Meerut. The 1st Bn. did much road, railway and other engineering work in Iraq, taking every opportunity for infantry training. Whilst at Mosul in 1924, they were placed under the orders of the Col. Comdt. Iraq Levies and were ordered to be ready to move up to the Turkish frontier, as the Turks had encroached over the boundary, but this incident was soon closed.

The 4th Battalion (formerly 48th Pioneers), commanded by Lt.-Colonel G. E. P. Davis, O.B.E.,

* On Col. Marjoribanks leaving for a Staff appointment in October, 1924, the command devolved on Major B. H. Wallis, M.C., and later for a period on Brevet Lt.-Col. A. B. Harley, D.S.O.

† *Vide* page 6.

disembarked at Basra on the 6th February, 1925, to relieve the 1st Battalion, who sailed thence a few days later, proceeding to Westmacott Lines, Kirkee, vacated by the former regiment. Iraq recently had become a Royal Air Force command, the garrison consisting of eight squadrons of aeroplanes and two R.A.F. armoured-car companies, supported by military units or "Ground Troops," as the R.A.F. termed them, the bulk of which were stationed at Hinaidi, the remainder being at Basra and Mosul. The Pioneers quickly established friendly relations with the airmen, which stood them in good stead throughout their stay in the country.

Soon after their arrival at Hanaidi, a party of officers and men went in two steam launches to visit the battlefield of Ctesiphon, where a number of veterans of the original 48th Pioneers wandered over the ground recalling memories of the bloody days of 1915. Liaison with R.A.F. units figured prominently in the battalion's training, officers making frequent flights as observers and accompanying the armoured-cars on desert reconnaissances. Each platoon was trained to embark in troop-carrying aeroplanes, and every man in the battalion, as well as a number of followers, made at least one flight.

In 1926 it was decided to reduce the garrison of Iraq by one battalion and the Pioneers, having been selected for withdrawal to India, sailed from Basra on the 26th September. As previously related,* this brought the number of Pioneer battalions in India to one above the authorised establishment, and led to the disbandment of the 4th Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers. By the 20th December, 1926, the 48th had passed into the shades.

* Details about the disbandment of the 4th Bn. are given in Chapter II. The British Officers of the Bn. at the disbandment were :—Lt.-Col. G. E. P. Davis, O.B.E., Majors D. B. Gray, M.C., N. B. Young, G. B. Davies, E. W. Burdett, D.S.O., M.C., I. Ferrier, Captains J. W. A. Parsons, C. S. W. Rayner, R. L. Shaw, W. G. O'C. Hewett, L. H. Worlledge, D. E. Andrews, F. W. Haswell, H. J. Hare, C. A. Grey and Lieut. F. D. K. Simmance. The Subadar-Major was Sardar Mohammed Khan.

The 128th Pioneers* was the only one of our battalions who enjoyed a lengthy spell of peace after their return from overseas in January, 1920. Following a year spent at Meerut, they were transferred to Burma and were stationed at Mandalay, with a detachment at Maymyo.

In January, 1922, H.R.H. The Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VIII) visited Mandalay and the garrison paraded for his inspection. At a luncheon given after the parade by Major-General Sir V. B. Fane in the mess of the 128th Pioneers, H.R.H. complimented the Pioneers on their appearance and concluded by remarking that "It was one of the finest marches past I have ever witnessed." Later General Fane wrote as follows to Colonel Goodfellow:—"As the 128th marched past, the Prince turned to me and said, 'Well, that is a magnificent regiment. They are a fine lot.' So I said, 'Yes, Sir, they are a magnificent regiment, and always have been so!'" After playing polo that afternoon, H.R.H. rode across the ground to where several hundreds of the 128th were watching the game. He was cheered by all with an enthusiasm which reached its climax when he shook hands and conversed with the Indian Officers, who were present with their men. Men threw their "pugris" into the air, cheered and clapped their hands, expressing their delight with an exuberance unusual to sepoy.

The 3rd Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers, as the 128th Pioneers were now named, sailed from Rangoon under the command of Lt.-Colonel D. S. Graham on the 30th November, 1924, *en route* for Waziristan. The circular road through that country, up the Takki Zam from Tank to Razmak and then down the Tochi valley, and so on to Bannu, had been roughly got

* Brevet Lt.-Col. N. G. B. Goodfellow, C.I.E., had acted as C.O. of the 128th Pioneers for several years in Mesopotamia, but shortly before the regiment returned to India, Lt.-Col. A. C. Ellis was appointed Commandant, joining at Meerut. When the command of the 121st Pioneers fell vacant, Lt.-Col. Ellis transferred to it in March, 1921, as it was his former battalion, and Lt.-Col. Goodfellow succeeded him as Commandant of the 128th, being promoted Colonel shortly afterwards.

through by the end of 1922, following which further operations against the Mahsuds had quickly brought the tribesmen to terms. This road now required to be more thoroughly constructed, in order to be fit for motor traffic in all seasons of the year, and to get this done quickly* companies from all three corps of Sappers and Miners, and several battalions from the Madras, Bombay, Sikh and Hazara Pioneers were employed. The 3rd Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers reached the perimeter camp of Akha Khel (a few miles above Sararogha) on the 15th December, and were soon at work on their section of the road, rock blasting, earth and stone cutting, and making concrete causeways. To get their task completed as soon as possible, the Pioneers put every available man to work, including signallers, bandsmen and even some clerks. Despite this hard manual labour for eight hours a day, the Band still managed to perform when required to do so, and the Signallers obtained the highest "Figure of Merit" of any regiment in Waziristan. An Infantry Battalion at Akha Khel provided covering parties, but the Pioneers always worked with their rifles close at hand, and posted their Lewis guns to give additional protection in case any Mahsud gang should be tempted to make one of their sudden attacks.

In March, 1925, the battalion heard with regret of the death of its Colonel, Major General Sir Richard Westmacott, K.C.B., D.S.O., at the age of 84.

On the completion of the road in May, 1925, Akha Khel was evacuated and the garrison marched to Razmak. For the remainder of its time in Waziristan, the 3rd Battalion did a good deal of infantry work, in addition to occasional technical tasks; it took its turn of duty on road protection, destroyed a Mahsud fort erected in defiance of the Political Agent's orders, accompanied the Razmak Column on a demonstration march to Wana, and took part in some shorter marches. Although the Column was occasionally sniped, the 3rd Battalion had no casualties.

* *Vide* Field Marshal Sir Claud Jacob's Introduction to this book.

In December, 1926, the 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers, commanded by Colonel W. G. Cochran, D.S.O., left Meerut for Waziristan, and marched up the Tochi valley to Razmak, where it relieved the 3rd Battalion, who proceeded to Meerut. The 2nd Battalion took part in several marches through parts of the country, on one of which they repaired some tracks around Ladha which had been made by the 121st Pioneers in 1920, when there was a brigade perimeter camp at that place. They also constructed a number of small works at Razmak, in addition to ordinary training. In the Razmak Brigade Sports they tied for first place with the 1st Bn. 12th Frontier Force Regiment. In February, 1927, the Pioneers moved to Razani, and in October they left Waziristan for Nowshera.

With the hot weather of 1928 came disturbing rumours concerning the intentions of Army Headquarters with regard to Pioneers, but it was not until October that official intimation was received that all the battalions of the 2nd Bombay Pioneers were to be merged into a new organization to be called the Corps of Bombay Pioneers. In a similar manner were to be formed the Corps of Madras, Sikh and Hazara Pioneers.

A conference* of commanding officers, with their adjutants, of all battalions of the 2nd Bombay Pioneers, met at Agra to consider how to carry out the task best described in a semi-official letter on the subject as "Putting all existing units and their property into a melting pot and drawing off the new Corps Headquarters and two active battalions, without partiality, favour or affection being shown to any existing unit."

The C.O.'s conference unanimously recommended that the word "Corps" should be omitted and that the new organization should be called "The Bombay

* The conference lasted seven days, and was attended by:—Colonel G. W. Cochran, D.S.O., Capt. F. H. Skinner, 2nd Bn. Lt.-Col. W. B. P. Tugwell, Capt. S. F. H. Williams, 1st Bn., Lt.-Col. G. A. Clarke, Capt. T. H. W. Hight, 10th Bn., Lt.-Col. D. B. Gray, M.C., Capt. R. D. Whitehill, 3rd Bn.

Pioneers," but, although nearly all the other suggestions of the conference were accepted, this one was turned down.

The new organization, the reasons given for its introduction and the manner in which it was carried out have been described in Chapters I and II, so it suffices to relate here that the Corps of Bombay Pioneers emerged with the following units* :—

Corps Headquarters Corps of Bombay Pioneers.

1st (Marine) Battalion Corps of Bombay Pioneers.

2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion Corps of Bombay Pioneers.

Although the titles " Marine " and " Kelat-i-Ghilzie " were given to the 1st and 2nd Bn. respectively, these battalions were no more descended exclusively from the old Marine Battalion and the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie than they were from any of the other battalions, as they all had been completely fused into the new ones.

Major-General W. C. Black, C.S.I., C.I.E., formerly Colonel of the 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Bn., 2nd Bombay Pioneers, was appointed to be Colonel of the Corps of Bombay Pioneers, and on his death in December, 1930, he was succeeded by Colonel (now Major-General) N. C. Bannatyne, C.B., C.I.E., who had previously served in the 128th Pioneers. Curiously the first recorded Colonel of any of our battalions bore the same name as the last one, as can be seen from this copy of the outside page of an old manuscript, which reads : " Return† for November, 1801, of the 1st Battalion of the 4th Regiment of Native Infantry whereof Major-General James Bannatyne is Colonel. Monantoedy, 1st December, 1801."

Corps Headquarters remained at Agra until March, 1931, when it was moved to Westmacott Lines,

* The companies, organized so that they could function independently on the model of companies of Sappers and Miners, were numbered throughout the Corps, i.e. 1, 2, 3 of 1st Bn., 4, 5, 6 of 2nd Bn., and A and B of Corps Headquarters.

† This Return is signed by Captain J. P. Dickinson, and contains the names of other officers mentioned in Chapter IV. The " Record of Service " of the Bn. has no mention of Major-General J. Bannatyne or of any other Colonel of the Regiment. The word " Bombay " is not mentioned in the Return.

Kirkee, where the 1st (Marine) Battalion was already stationed, these lines having been suitably enlarged to take both units.

The 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion was formed at Nowshera, and was inspected by H. E. the Commander-in-Chief on the 5th April, 1929. On the 4th June the Sikh company (Major B. H. Wallis, M.C., and Capt. R. W. Kearns) proceeded, via Kohat, to the Shiah guaranteed area in the tribal territory of the Tirah, where they constructed the Marai-Dargai road, which occupied them for four months, their work receiving high praise from the G.O.C. in C., Northern Command.

In 1930 the N.W. Frontier Province was in a disturbed state owing to the revolutionary activities of Congress agitators and of a political organization called "Red Shirts." Riots occurred in Peshawar City, and, under the delusion that the British Government was losing control, Mohmund and Afridi "lashkars," displaying red flags, began to move into the Peshawar valley. Contrary to their usual custom, these tribesmen refrained from looting, and their object apparently was to support the revolutionaries. Parties of these tribesmen managed to filtrate into the gardens on the outskirts of the city, a considerable amount of sniping went on at night, and a supply depôt was unsuccessfully attacked. Action by the Royal Air Force and the Peshawar garrison soon caused the tribesmen to retreat to their hills, though no striking success was scored against them. To assist in the rapid movement of small columns dealing with refractory villages and clearing the lairs of Afridi intruders, the 2nd (K.I.G.) Bn., Corps of Bombay Pioneers, under Major B. H. Wallis,* M.C., marched from Nowshera on the

* Lt.-Col. D. B. Gray, M.C., the Commandant of the 2nd Bn., was on leave and rejoined on 3rd December, 1930, at Ilm Gadr. As a captain this officer, having been invalided from the 48th Pioneers in Mesopotamia, joined the Royal Flying Corps and was shot down and taken prisoner in France in September, 1916. He was awarded the M.C. for escaping from Germany in August, 1918. At the conclusion of the operations against the Afridis in 1930-31, the 2nd Bn. received a number of Mentions in Despatches and Lt.-Col. D. B. Gray, M.C., was awarded the O.B.E.

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27th August, 1930, towards Peshawar to make a circular road round the city from Chamkaanni on the Grand Trunk Road, through the Kohat road, towards Bara Fort.

After normal conditions had been restored in the Peshawar valley, it was decided to punish the Afridis by denying them the use of the Khajuri Plain for grazing their flocks and by confining them to their mountain fastnesses during the cold weather until they would come to terms, and troops moved into the Khajuri Plain to enforce this blockade. The 2nd Battalion went to Bara Fort, and thence joined the Nowshera Brigade at Ilm Gadr. One company of the Pioneers, under Capt. D. S. Sowton, was detached to a desolate spot near the hills called Narai Khwar, where it had some skirmishing with Afridis. Soon after Christmas, 1930, the battalion moved farther up to Karawal with the Rawalpindi Brigade, and was employed on road-making and building various fortified posts, including Fort Salop. The battalion also took part with the Brigade in some minor operations, in which it had one man* dangerously wounded. The blockade was raised in April, 1931, and the troops were withdrawn from the Khajuri Plain.

The 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion was then sent to Sarband, between Peshawar and Bara Fort, for more road-making, which entailed constructing a number of concrete bridges. In the winter of 1931-32, one company made a road from Char Bagh Fort in the Khyber to below Michni Khandao, whilst the other two companies continued this road to the top of the two "Bens" on the Afghan frontier. In March, 1932, the 2nd Battalion moved to Kirkee, and the 1st (Marine) Battalion, commanded by Lt.-Colonel A. K. Macpherson, M.V.O., proceeded thence to Nowshera.

On the arrival of the 1st Battalion at Nowshera, a detachment under Capt. W. L. Alston, O.B.E., was

* This man was Naik Dasrath Gunjal, whose name is given because he was the last Pioneer to be wounded by enemy action. The first recorded casualty in 1779 is named on page 31.



COLOUR PARTY,
2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers.
Meerut, 1925.

sent to hold the bridge over the Kabul River at Jehangiri, and to observe the river from there to Attock, in order to prevent Red Shirts from crossing to carry out their announced intention of causing trouble at Peshawar on the occasion of the opening of the Legislative Assembly by the Viceroy. Another detachment, under Capt. G. L. Tomkins, M.C., went to Chappri to construct concrete blockhouses for the personnel of the pumping station for Cherat.

Official intimation that the Government had decided to disband all Indian Pioneers was received on the 22nd July, 1932, but the orders on which executive action could be taken did not come till the 7th November. Despite the heavy blow of knowing themselves to be under sentence of extinction, the Bombay Pioneers continued to carry on work, training, and sport with unabated energy, being particularly careful to keep up their high standard of smartness on parade. On the 4th October, though it was expected that orders to start disbandment would shortly arrive, the 1st (Marine) Battalion, less details essential for guards and duties at Nowshera, proceeded up the Khyber Pass to regrade and improve the road between Landi Kotal and Landi Khana. The Garrison Engineer had estimated that this work would take at least two months, but the battalion determined to complete the task thoroughly before being recalled for disbandment, and, the men rising splendidly to the occasion, all the work was finished by the 16th November. Two days later the 1st Battalion was back at Nowshera to commence the hateful task of putting an end to themselves.

Those who have not been through such an experience can hardly realize the grief felt by officers and men at the disbandment of their own corps, and this feeling is fully shared by the retired officers at home and by the pensioned Indian Officers and men in their villages. The sentimental loss was the same for all, but for the enlisted classes there was also some material loss to be faced, as many Indian Officers, N.C.O.s and men had

to be mustered out before they had completed their normal term of service, and in the future there would be fewer vacancies in the Army for their sons to fill. Army Headquarters and all concerned were most sympathetic and did their best to soften the blow, but it remained a heavy one.

A conference* of commanding officers was held at Kirkee, and their decisions as to the disposal of funds and other property are given in Appendix 11. A list showing the posting of officers to other regiments and the number of vacancies allotted to the men in various units appears in Appendix 10.

On the 23rd November, 1932, two farewell parades were held. At Nowshera the 1st (Marine) Battalion, commanded by Lt.-Colonel A. K. Macpherson, M.V.O., was reviewed by Major-General J. F. S. D. Coldridge, C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., and at Kirkee the Corps Headquarters, commanded by Major E. H. B. Ozanne, and the 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion, under Major B. H. Wallis, M.C., paraded before Major-General E. C. Alexander, C.B., C.I.E., D.S.O. Both Generals made speeches on behalf of the Commander-in-Chief, complimenting the Bombay Pioneers on their distinguished services in the past, on their fine bearing on parade, and on the soldierly manner in which they had accepted the hard fate of disbandment; and mentioning that arrangements had been made for a certain number of the men to transfer to other regiments. In his speech General Alexander referred to an additional reason for the disbandment to those given at the end of Chapter I, and this portion of his speech is, therefore, reproduced. He said :—

“On behalf of the Commander-in-Chief I say to you : The Commander-in-Chief has issued the orders for the disbandment of the Pioneer Corps with the greatest regret. Why then has the order been given ? Because the Commander-in-Chief is convinced that

* Attending the Conference were :—1st Bn. : Lt. Col. A. K. Macpherson, M.V.O., Capt. J. F. Kekwick. 2nd Bn. : Major B. H. Wallis, M.C., Capt. W. R. Lloyd Jones. Corps. H.Q. : Major E. H. B. Ozanne, Capt. O. K. Steveni.

to meet adequately the conditions of a future war, changes in the organization of our Army are essential, and that the money for those essential changes cannot be found without disbanding the Pioneer Corps.”*

The battalions then marched past for the last time.

A final ceremony, that of laying up the Kelat-i-Ghilzie Colour in the Viceroy's House at Delhi, took place on the 13th March, 1933, after the disbandment had been completed. The Colour Party, commanded by Captain J. E. B. Seager, together with an Escort Company and the Band of the 2nd Bn. The York and Lancaster Regiment, was drawn up facing the steps of the house. The Viceroy then moved down the steps to a point facing the Colour Party and made his speech, after which the Colour was carried in slow time up the steps, the Band playing “Auld Lang Syne” as it disappeared into the Viceroy's House.

In his speech, His Excellency the Right Honourable the Earl of Willingdon, Viceroy and Governor-General of India, said :—

“Colour Party of the 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion, Bombay Pioneers: I can assure you in all sincerity that the decision of my Government to abolish the Corps of Pioneers was taken after the most prolonged consideration and with profound regret. But there was no other course open to them.

“As one reads the battle honours of these historic battalions, one seems almost to be turning over the pages of British and Indian history. Wherever there has been fighting, there the Pioneers have been—Mysore, the Persian Gulf, Seringapatam, Kelat-i-Ghilzie, Abyssinia, Kandahar, Tofrek, Afghanistan, and many other campaigns; and the Kelat-i-Ghilzie Battalion has taken its full measure of hardship and of glory.

“I share in all sincerity your grief at handing over this treasured emblem, but I desire to assure you that

* According to “*The Times*” of the 14th October, 1932, the anticipated saving on the disbandment of Indian Pioneers was about twenty-five lakhs of rupees annually.

I am proud to receive it. It will be safeguarded for all time with care and reverence, and the deeds of heroism and devotion which it has inspired will never be forgotten."

THE END



Bugle call of the 1st (Marine) Battalion.



Bugle call of the 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion.

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APPENDIX 2

CLASS COMPOSITION

THE MARINE BATTALION.

In the decision of Government to raise the Corps, dated 31st December, 1776, it was stated that the 500 sepoys were to be all "Moormen" (i.e. Mussalmans).

"Recruits for the battalion were brought from Guzerat, the Deccan and the Coast, a reward being allowed of Rs. 6 for a Grenadier and Rs. 5 for a battalion recruit.

"In consequence of the great demand for men for the Marine duties, in 1785 Government was pleased to order drafts from the 1st, 3rd, 4th and 5th Battalions to complete the Corps. The following year the Marine Battalion was allowed to entertain battalion recruits an inch less in height (5 ft. 2 in.) than the other Corps, but to be young men or growing lads."

"By authority from the Honourable the Court of Directors, under date the 12th July, 1805, in their commands to the Supreme Government, the Honourable the Governor in Council was pleased to direct that the Corps of Native Infantry, and the Marine Battalion, of the Bombay Army, should entertain an establishment of 25 Boys to each Battalion, to be enlisted and recruited from the sons and relatives of the Native Officers and soldiers."

These Recruit Boys, as they were called, were an asset to the Bombay Battalions. They were educated in the regimental school, drilled by the Drill Havildar, and performed simple duties like that of messenger. They wore the uniform of their battalion. On becoming sepoys their knowledge of English made them useful as clerks, signallers or bandsmen. Several

of them rose to be Indian Officers. Recruit Boys were abolished in 1909.

It is not clear whether the decision that all the men of the Marine Battalion should be Mussalmans was carried out at first or not, but from the names of the men who distinguished themselves in the early days of the battalion it is evident that the composition soon consisted of Coastal Mussalmans, whose first name was usually Shaikh, and of the low caste Hindus called Parwaris, whose names generally ended with "nac" or "nak."

The coastal Mussalmans (also called Bombay or Deccani Mussalmans) were of the type now employed as "laskars" by steamship companies. A portrait of one of these men appears in the illustration called "A sepoy of the Marine Battalion." The Parwaris were sturdy fellows, and the frequency with which their names appear on several memorials in Bombay and on the Coregaun Memorial near Poona witnesses to their good fighting qualities. They were good at games.*

Hindus of higher caste were unsuitable for the Marine Battalion, owing to their objection to crossing the "kala pani," and to the difficulties caused by their caste on board ship, but from the following order of 1812 it appears that a few occasionally enlisted. The order reads :—

"In consideration of the gallant conduct of Ragoojee Bhonsla, Havildar in the Marine Battalion, while employed with the "Dart," Pattamar, against the piratical vessels in the Gulf of Cutch, the Hon'ble the Governor in Council directs that he be promoted to Jemadar in a Corps of Native Infantry of the line, as there are objections to Hindoos embarking on board ship on Marine duty, and accordingly he is promoted and removed to the 2nd Battalion 7th Regiment."

* The Marine Battalion, in addition to hockey and the usual Indian Army sports, had a good cricket eleven in Bombay, where the grass parade ground of the Marine Lines provided several good pitches. Carnegy, Greig and Scott played for the Europeans and Subadar (later Sub.-Major) Sher Khan for the Mohammadans in the Quadrangular matches. Sher Khan, as well as several of the Parwaris in the Bn.'s 1st XI, had learnt to play cricket whilst Recruit Boys.

The first "Caste Return" to appear in the "Digest of Services" is dated 1st January, 1891, and is as follows :—

Mohammadans	...	448	Eurasian	...	...	1
Mahrattas	...	...	*Christians	...	...	10
Mochees	...	67	Jews	...	...	4
Parwaris	...	273				
Ramosi	...	1				<hr/> 805

In 1895 all regiments of the Bombay Army were organized with class companies, and the composition of the 21st Bombay Infantry (The Marine Battalion) became :—

4	companies	Dekkani† Mahrattas.
2	,,	Rajputana Mahomedans.
2	,,	Dekkani Mahomedans.

The Parwaris were allowed to serve on, but no more were enlisted. By 1900 there were 109 Parwaris in the unit, and in 1914 there still remained 35. The Rajputana Mahomedans enlisted were all of the people called Meo.

In 1911 the constitution of the 121st Pioneers was reconstructed, becoming :—

No. 1	Double-company	Pathans.
„ 2	„	Mahrattas.
„ 3	„	Jats.
„ 4	„	Rajputana Mussalmans.

The Dekkhanni Mussalmans were eliminated by transferring as many as possible to other regiments, the remainder being mustered out. One of the two double-companies of Mahrattas was transferred from the 121st to the 107th Pioneers, who in exchange sent their double-company of Bikanir Jats. The Pathans authorized were Yusufzais, with some Trans-frontier Gaduns and Bunerwals. To make a start, 2 Indian Officers (one of whom later became Subadar-Major

* These Christians were Goanese in the Band.

† This and other words are spelt in the varying ways they occur in the Records at different dates.

and Hon. Lieut. Sardar Khan, Bahadur), and 117 other ranks were transferred from the 129th Baluchis.

At first there was some latent jealousy between the Meos and the newly-arrived Pathans. After a semi-final of an inter-company hockey tournament at Kacha in 1913, a fight waged with hockey sticks and stones suddenly occurred between the two companies, in which one of each class was killed and some seventeen injured. This cleared the air, and the two classes of Mussalmans became firm friends.

The Headquarters of the 4th Division at Quetta received the news of this brawl so philosophically that the only comment sent to the regiment was the question "Let us know when the final is being played?"

107TH PIONEERS.

Two Establishments are first given, to show the numbers required :—

<i>4th Bn. of Bombay Sepoys. 1788.</i>	<i>1st Bn. 4th Regt. of N.I. 1796.</i>
1 Captain, Commandant.	1 Lieut.-Colonel.
8 Lieutenants (1 as Adjt.)	1 Major.
8 Subadars.	3 Captains.
8 Jemadars.	11 Lieutenants.
8 European Sergeants.	5 Ensigns.
32 Havildars.	1 European Sergeant.
32 Naiques.	10 Subadars.
16 Drummers and Fifers.	10 Jemadars.
544 Sepoys.	50 Havildars.
8 Puckaulis.	50 Naiques.
	900 Sepoys.
	10 Puckaulis.
	2 Assistant Surgeons.

The number of sepoy was raised to 1,000 in 1805, and to 1,050 in 1810, dropping to 850 in 1822.

The earliest Caste Return given in the Battalion's Records is of uncertain date, but it must be earlier than 1812 :—

Mahrattas	...	...	...	387
Parwaris	...	...	...	256
Mooches	...	...	...	30
Mongsnob (<i>sic</i>)	...	...	...	6
Poorbeas	...	...	...	260
Mussalmans (Deccan)	...	...	...	95
Mussalmans (Hindustan)	...	...	...	17
Christians	...	...	...	8
Jews	...	...	...	5
				<hr/> 1,064 <hr/>

In 1796 it was ordered that the flank companies were still to retain their designation of Grenadiers, but the Left Grenadier Company was no longer to be composed of tall men, but “ of such men as by merit and activity of make are deemed deserving of that distinction and equal to the fatigues that may be required from a chosen company.”

In 1798 recruiting parties were sent to Bancote, and through Canara to Soonda, and a few men, mostly Mussalmans, were enlisted at Battalion Headquarters. In 1810 recruiting parties went to Berar, where they obtained some Poorbea and Rajput recruits “ of good height and age.” Also Naique Padam Sing and ten sepoy were away eleven months recruiting in Hindustan, and returned with 120 fine recruits.

In a Return of the Battalion for November, 1801, the strength is shown as :—

Total	...	...	...	611
Wanting to complete	...	...	...	339
Establishment	...	...	...	950

Presumably the deficiency in its strength was due to the wastage caused by the Mysore War of 1799, Wellesley's campaign against Doondia Wagh in 1800, followed by the suppression of the rebellion in Wynaad in 1801.

Class companies were formed in 1893, as follows :—

A	company, men from	Rajputana.
B	„	„ Hindustan.
C	„	„ Mahrattas, Hindustan.
D	„	„ Mahrattas.
E	„	„ Mahrattas.
F	„	„ Punjabis and Mochis.
G	„	„ Punjabis, etc.
H	„	„ Mussalmans.

In 1895 the 7th Bombay Infantry was organized with :—

2	companies,	Konkoni Mahrattas.
2	„	Jats (Western Rajputana).
2	„	Mohammedans (Rajputana).
2	„	Mohammedans (Central India).

But it was not until the following year that these were arranged into pairs of class companies.

On the conversion of the regiment into Pioneers in 1900, the class composition was altered to :—

2	companies,	Pathans.
2	„	Rajputana Mohammedans.
2	„	Lobana Sikhs.
2	„	Jats of Bikanir.

In July of the above year the Double-company system was introduced.

The Jat double-company was sent to the 121st Pioneers in 1911, and a Dekkani Mahratta company was received in exchange.

12TH PIONEERS (THE KELAT-I-GHILZIE REGIMENT).

From its raising in 1838 until after the Mutiny the Regiment appears to have been mainly composed of Brahmans, Rajputs, and Hindustani Mohammedans, perhaps all mixed up in the companies.

On becoming a regular regiment of the line of the Bengal Army in 1861 its composition was changed, and this was again altered in 1883, as shown below :—

	1861.	1883.
A	company, Jat Sikhs.	Rajputs.
B	„ Pathans.	Hindustani Mohammedans.
C	„ Brahmans.	Brahmans.
D	„ Punjabi Mohammedans and Ahirs.	Other Hindus.
E	„ Hindustani Mohammedans.	Hindustani Mohammedans.
F	„ Rajputs.	Rajputs.
G	„ Jat Sikhs.	Other Hindus.
H	„ Punjabi Mohammedans.	Hindustani Mohammedans.

Thus in 1883 the Regiment reverted to the classes enlisted from its formation up till just after the Mutiny.

In 1893 the 12th Bengal Infantry became a class regiment, and was composed entirely of Hindustani Mussalmans. Five existing companies were transferred to other units, and one company was received from the 8th, two from the 10th, and two from the 11th Bengal Infantry.

On becoming the 12th Bengal Pioneers in 1903, its composition was changed to :—

2	Double-companies,	Lobana Sikhs.
2	„	Hindu Jats (Rohtak) Punjab only.

128TH PIONEERS.

The “Record Book” of the 28th Bombay Infantry is so well and fully kept that it is surprising to find no mention of the classes enlisted in its early days. Apparently any suitable man was taken and no importance attached to his class. From details of places to which recruiting parties were sent and from the names of N.C.O.s promoted to Indian Officer it appears, however, that the bulk of the Regiment consisted of Deccani and Konkoni Mahrattas, Parwaris

and Mussalmans, but that there were some men of other classes is shown by a few names ending in Singh and Ram.

The last mention of an European Sergeant of any of the battalions occurs in the "Record Book" of the 28th Bo. I. under 1853, which records the death from cholera of Sergeant-Major Hall. British N.C.O.s. were again used with Indian units in 1918-19, several being lent to our Depôts in India to teach young Indian instructors and recruits. They were a great success.

In 1864 there is an entry that "the designation of companies as 'Captain _____'s Company' is abolished."

Class sections were formed in 1892, and class companies in the following year, as follows :—

<i>Sections in 1892.</i>		<i>Companies in 1893.</i>	
15 sections of	Mahrattas.	A Coy.	Mahrattas.
4	„ Rajputs.	B	„ Rajputs.
2	„ Sikhs.	C	„ Mahrattas.
2	„ Pardeshies.	D	„ Mahrattas.
2	„ Central India.	E	„ Hindustanis.
2	„ Punjabi	F	„ Mussalmans.
	Mussalmans.		
1	„ Hindustani	G	„ Mahrattas,
	Mussalmans.		Parwaris, and
			Jews.
1	„ Deccani	H	„ Punjabis.
	Mussalmans.		
1	„ Pathans.		
2	„ Parwaris,		
	Jews, etc.		

In 1895 the composition of the Regiment was laid down as :—

4 companies Pathans.
4 „ Deccani Mahrattas.

This was again changed in 1900 to :

2	companies	Sikhs.
2	„	Pathans.
2	„	Deccani Mahrattas.
2	„	Rajputana Mussalmans.

48TH PIONEERS.

The regiment was raised in 1901 with :—

2	Double-companies,	Jats (Rohtak) Punjab only.
2	„	Lobana Sikhs.

2ND BOMBAY PIONEERS.

On being grouped as the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 10th Battalions 2nd Bombay Pioneers in 1922, it was ordered that each battalion was to consist of :—

1	company	Lobana Sikhs.
1	„	Mahrattas.
1	„	Meos (Rajputana, U.P., and Punjab).

This composition, and the reduction from four to three companies per battalion, involved getting rid of the Jats and Pathans, as also of the Rajputana Mussalmans other than Meos. The following had to be eliminated :—2 Jat companies and 1 Sikh company from each of the 12th and 48th Pioneers, 1 Jat and 1 Pathan company from the 121st, and 1 Pathan company from each of the 107th and 128th Pioneers. In addition the 107th Pioneers had to get rid gradually of their Ranghars and Khanzadars, who had formed the bulk of their Rajputana Mussalman company.

THE CORPS OF BOMBAY PIONEERS.

The class composition of the 2nd Bombay Pioneers was adhered to, but the reduction in strength necessitated the mustering out of about one-third of the personnel.

NOTE ON THE CLASSES ENLISTED.

THE PATHANS were mostly of the Yusufzai tribe from the British side of the border in the neighbourhood of Mardan and Peshawar, but a certain number of

Gaduns and Bunerwals from across the border were also enlisted. Their language is Pushtu. They are zealous Mussalmans. The Pathan is a fine figure of a man, with a fairish complexion, some with blue eyes, and he usually sports a lock of hair or curl just showing from beneath his pugri on both sides of his face. The contour of his nose upholds his claim to be descended from the lost tribes of Israel. He likes to be smartly dressed, a brightly embroidered waistcoat being a favourite garment. Being a British subject the Yusufzai has abandoned the blood-feud, but the Trans-frontier men still carry on that custom, which would hardly find favour with a life insurance company! Occasionally a Gadun or Bunerwal would ask for leave on urgent private affairs, openly giving as his reasons that he had received news of the murder of a relative, and that he was in honour bound to return home in order that he might carry out his part in the endless vendetta. The Pathan is of a cheerful disposition and makes a pleasant companion.

THE RAJPUTANA MUSSALMANS authorized for the Corps of Bombay Pioneers were all Meos, who live in Alwar and other places in the eastern part of Rajputana. Some centuries ago their ancestors were converted from Hinduism, and although now good Mahomedans, some of their customs still show traces of the older religion, much as European Christians still retain some Pagan customs. Recruits of the other classes could usually read and write their own language before enlisting, but the newly-joined Meos, with a few exceptions, were illiterate. Village schools, however, are being established by degrees, and in time the Meo will have a higher standard of education. He is of good physique. The Rajputana Mussalman company of the 107th Pioneers was composed of Ranghars from Gurgaon, Hissar and Rohtak, and of Khanzadars from Alwar and Bharatpur; these tribes were less "jungle" than the Meo.

THE JATS enlisted were all Hindus, and inhabit Bikanir and other parts of Rajputana, the United

Provinces and the Punjab. The Jat is of the yeoman farmer type, of sturdy build, and by his delightful manners appears to be a born gentleman.

THE MAHRATTAS of the Deccan, dark, thick-set, and wiry, were obtained from the villages around Poona, Satara, Belgaum, Sholapur, Ahmednagar and Kolhapur and were the only race of those authorized for the Bombay Pioneers, who had served continuously with the battalions of the Bombay Army for some one and a half centuries. The Mahratta is inclined to be reserved and takes a good deal of knowing. He makes a faithful friend.

In the old days, as freebooters, they were the terror of Hindustan, and later Wellesley praised the stubborn resistance they put up against him at Assaye; but after Maiwand until almost up to the Great War there existed a tendency in the Army to disparage their military value. This was unfortunately fostered by Lord Roberts' remark in his "Forty-one Years in India,"* when referring to the Madras Army, that "the ancient military spirit had died in them, as it had died in the ordinary Hindustani of Bengal and the Mahratta of Bombay, and that they could no longer with safety be pitted against warlike races, or employed outside the limits of southern India." That for once that great soldier's judgment was incorrect was amply proved by the record of the Mahrattas during 1914-18.

THE SIKHS enlisted were almost entirely Lobanas, who before the days of railways were the carriers of the Punjab. They were recruited in the districts of Lahore, Gurdaspur, Sialkot, Guzrat, and Jammu. The Sikh has his own religion, which has a Hindu tendency, amongst its tenets being the wearing of steel and the use of weapons, whilst tobacco in any form is prohibited. Although in theory there are no caste prejudices amongst themselves, this does not quite hold good in practice, as may be discovered if one asks Jat Sikhs to feed with Mazhbi Sikhs. At

* Page 383, Vol. 11, 2nd Ed. of "Forty-one Years in India."

about 15 years of age the boy goes through an initiation ceremony, after which his name is always followed by the title of "Singh." He then adopts the five symbols, namely "Kes" or uncut hair, "Kachh" or short drawers, "Kara"—an iron bracelet on the right wrist, "Kirpan"—a short sword, usually worn in miniature, and "Khanga"—a comb.

The Sikh has an impressive personality, and is easily recognizable by his beard, neatly rolled over a string. He makes a fine athlete. In money matters the Sikh rivals the traditional Scotsman.

Amongst the artificers in the Bombay Pioneers there were some Ramgarhia Sikhs, who make particularly skilful workmen. The Lobana Sikh prefers to be a long service man and to earn a pension. In some little villages inhabited entirely by Lobana Sikhs every boy was brought up with the idea of enlisting, and in the village school, which was financed and run by the villagers, the boys were taught Roman Urdu in preparation for their army career. The disbandment of the Bombay Pioneers came as a cruel blow to these good people.

* * * * *

Any attempt to compare the military value of the above classes would be a futile task. No officer could wish to have a better lot. In reality, nearly all the physically fit races of India, when tactfully disciplined, thoroughly trained and well led, make efficient soldiers.

APPENDIX 3

COLOURS

THE MARINE BATTALION.—Four sets of colours are known to have been issued to the Marine Battalion, but there may have been others.

A coloured illustration of a fragment of an old colour appears in this book, and though the tradition is that this fragment is part of the original set of colours, yet the actual date of it is doubtful. Although the Marine Battalion was raised in 1777, its "Digest of Services" was not written up until after the issue of a General Order dated the 28th July, 1812, directing that such a record should be kept, and no mention of the early colours appears in this "Digest." The illustration shows that the shamrock is included in the embroidered wreath, and this emblem was not used until after the Union of 1801, so it seems probable that the date of issue was about 1802, unless an older colour was altered by having a new embroidered wreath sewn onto it. The "shield" in the centre of this fragment appears only on very old colours.

On the 16th November, 1875, H.R.H. The Prince of Wales (afterwards King Edward VII) presented new colours to the 21st Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry (The Marine Battalion), commanded by Colonel A. Carnegy,* on the Marine Lines parade ground at Bombay, this being the first occasion on which a member of the Royal Family had presented colours to an Indian regiment. In his speech H.R.H. said that it would give him great pleasure to take the old colours to England, where they would always occupy a prominent place in his house. They are now housed at Sandringham. The date of issue of these old colours is not recorded.

* Later General Alexander Carnegy, C.B.

The last set of colours was presented by H.R.H. the Duke of Connaught on the 23rd February, 1903, on the same parade ground, the battalion being commanded by Major C. G. Carnegie, a son of the commandant on the previous occasion.

On becoming the 121st Pioneers in October, 1903, the battalion ceased to carry colours. The fragment of the old colour and the sets of 1875 and 1903 were framed and hung in the mess.

When the Corps of Bombay Pioneers was disbanded, these framed colours were placed in All Saints' Church, Kirkee.

107TH PIONEERS.—The issue of seven sets of colours is recorded. On the formation of the 4th Battalion of Bombay Sepoys in 1788, it was directed in Government Orders, dated 13th November, 1788, that "the 4th Battalion should be distinguished by a Star on the turbans, which should also be embroidered on the colours."

In consequence of the Union of Ireland with Great Britain, the King's colour was altered (Government Order of 28th May, 1801), and a new set of colours was received by the commanding officer, Captain J. P. Dickinson, in Wynaad on the 20th February, 1802. These colours also had a Star embroidered on them.

On account of the facings of the regiment being changed from yellow to white in 1808, new colours were received by Captain W. Hull at Surat on the 10th May, 1810. These colours had no Star on them.

On permission being granted (Government Orders of 20th May, 1823), for the battalion to have the words "Seedaseer" and "Seringapatam" on its regimental colour, the old colours were handed in and a new set was received by Captain Arden at Malligaum on the 28th February, 1824.

The battle-honour "Mysore" for the Campaign of 1790-92 was not granted until 1889 (G.G.O. 395 of April, 1889), and was then added to those on the Colours.

Later colours were presented as follows :—

1839, by Major-General Fearon at Mhow.

1859, by Brig.-General Shortt at Bombay.

1884, by Mrs. Lucas at Ahmednagar.

On becoming Pioneers in 1900, the battalion ceased to carry colours. The 1884 colours in use up to that date were framed, as were also an older set, and stood in the mess in the form of screens, a plate on the frame of the older colours recording that they were the set issued in 1824. From the illustration of these colours it can be seen that this inscription may be incorrect, as the colours are inscribed "VII Bombay Native Infantry," whilst the colours received on the 28th February, 1824, were issued to the 1st Battalion 4th Regiment. The name was not changed to 7th Regiment until the publication of a General Order, dated the 1st June, 1824. It appears to be more likely, therefore, that the colours illustrated are either those of 1839 or 1859.

On the disbandment in 1933, these two sets of framed colours were placed in the Viceroy's House at Delhi.

12TH PIONEERS (THE KELAT-I-GHILZIE REGIMENT).—The General Order of 1842 directing that the regimental colour of the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie should be composed of the three colours of the military ribbon of India, and be inscribed with the word "Kelat-i-Ghilzie," appears on page 21. The subsequent regimental colours issued were of a similar pattern, the King's colours being of the usual design. An illustration of the last Kelat-i-Ghilzie colour is given in this book.

The first set of colours was presented to the regiment at the close of the year 1842 by the Governor-General of India, Lord Ellenborough, in the presence of the force assembled at Ferozepore, the battalion's services in the 1st Afghan War being eulogized.

The second set was given on the 21st March, 1861, by the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Hugh Rose, on a garrison parade at Amballa, when the C.-in-C.

referred to the discipline and fidelity displayed by this Bengal battalion during "the mutinies."

The date of the presentation of the third and last set is not mentioned in the battalion's records, but was probably soon after the battalion's return from Burma in 1889.

Fragments of an old set of colours, together with the upper part of the poles, were preserved in a glass-fronted wooden case in the mess, the pole heads consisting of a complete miniature Royal helmet surmounted by a crown.

On the 12th Bengal Infantry becoming Pioneers in 1903, and ceasing to carry colours, the Commandant, who must have had a Cromwellian contempt for historical emblems, had the last set of colours sent to Kirkee Arsenal. The authorities there arranged a fitting reception for the colours, and a detachment of British Infantry in full dress, with Band and Drums, were drawn up to salute them. The embarrassment of all can be imagined when a country bullock-cart arrived at the Arsenal gates carrying the colours packed in a box!

The granting of permission to the 2nd Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers to carry the Kelat-i-Ghilzie colour on parade and thus be the only Pioneer battalion ever to carry a colour, and the laying-up of this colour in the Viceroy's House after the disbandment have already been described in Chapter XIV. The King's colour of this set, as well as the colours of 1842, the latter in new frames, were also deposited in the Viceroy's House at Delhi.

128TH PIONEERS.—Only two sets of colours were issued to the 28th Bombay Infantry. The original set was presented to the regiment, commanded by Major H. Lyons, on the 23rd November, 1847, by Brigadier F. Schuler at Malligaum. After the colours had been consecrated by the Rev. Dr. Goldstein "in his usual impressive manner," they were handed to Ensigns Heyman and Robertson in the customary way, and

the Brigadier made his speech "in a loud and clear tone of voice," to which Major Lyons made a suitable reply. The new colours in charge of the Grenadier Company were then trooped from right to left of the line in slow time. There followed a "feu-de-joie," a march past, and an advance in review order.

On the 24th November, 1864, colours of a new pattern were presented at Maleidpore by Major-General Shortt, C.B., the battalion being under the command of Major C. Hodgkinson. The ceremonial differed slightly from that of the previous occasion. The designation of flank companies, i.e. the Grenadier and Light companies, with their special* cap badges, had been abolished from May of that year, and the companies numbered from 1 to 8, each now commanded by a "Native Officer," whilst the reduced number of "European Officers" were allotted to Wings and were all mounted. The colours were not consecrated, and on this occasion were handed to two Indian Officers, by name Jemadars Ittoo Khandway and Seetal Panday, with the admonition "Defend this colour with your life." There was no "feu-de-joie." The old colours were kept in the mess and later were put into a glass-fronted case.

On becoming the first Pioneer battalion of the Bombay Army in 1888, the 28th ceased to carry colours, and on the 21st November, 1889, the colours last issued were placed in glass cases in St. Mary's Church, Poona.

After the disbandment of the Corps of Bombay Pioneers, the older set of colours were hung in the same church.

48TH PIONEERS.—Having been raised as Pioneers, colours were not issued to this battalion.

* Though the Flank companies were assimilated to the battalion companies in May, 1864, yet the N.C.O.s of the companies then called No. 1 and 8, continued as before to wear chevrons on both arms until 1867, but "the men of all ranks of the flank companies are available for all duties in the same manner as the men of other companies, including those of detachment and escort."

APPENDIX 4

BADGES AND MOTTOES

(WITH A FEW NOTES ON DRESS.)

THE MARINE BATTALION. The first mention in the battalion's "Digest of Services" of its Anchor Badge reads as follow:—"When the distinctions for the Native Corps were selected by the Commander-in-Chief in November, 1788, the battalion's Feather was ordered to be black, blue Angricks* and an Anchor Badge."

* Note on dress.—The meaning of this word "Angrick" had long been a mystery, but recently Sir Patrick Cadell gave the following interpretation: "This word probably represents a Hindustani word in its Dekhani form of 'angrikha,' which is found in some old books, and means 'a long coat or tunic.'"

That being the case, it appears that the original uniform of the Marine Battalion was blue, and, at a guess, the red coat was probably not introduced until the Marine Battalion became a regular battalion of the line in 1818. The men continued to wear blue for the hot weather until this was substituted by khaki (with blue striped pugris and blue putties) in 1894. By 1903 the service dress was all khaki. In full dress (red), white canvas gaiters were worn. Facings were green, until on becoming Pioneers they were changed to white.

A few orders about the dress of Officers are reproduced:—

1800. "The Officers of the Marine Battalion to wear jackets with Green Facings, cuffs and collar, and silver embroidery. The strap of the epaulette to be of a green ground with an Anchor engraved on the button and Breast Plate. In every other respect the dress to be the same as the Officers of Native Infantry."

1875. "Blue serge coats sanctioned for European and Native Officers, to be worn when the regiment is dressed in blue."

1884. New Dress Regulations sanction wearing of Anchor Badge on collar of tunics of Officers, Marine Battalion, as also on Head-dress. Special pattern of waistplate for sword-belt, design having an Anchor in centre, surrounded by words "Bombay Marines" and Motto of Regiment in Hindustani on scroll beneath. Shape of plate oblong.



The Marine Battalion's motto of "Khushki-o-tari," or its more frequently used equivalent of "Per mare, per terram," goes back to its early days, though the date when it was granted or adopted is not recorded.

On becoming the 121st Pioneers in 1903 the battalion ceased to use this Anchor Badge and the motto, and instead adopted the Pioneer badge of Crossed Axes. When, however, it became the 10th Bn. (The Marine Battalion) 2nd Bombay Pioneers the Anchor Badge and the Motto again appeared in the Army List, though the men continued to wear the Crossed Axes on their collars.

107TH PIONEERS. In Appendix 3, on the Colours, it is stated that in 1788 the battalion was ordered to wear a "Star" on the turbans. This was discontinued in 1808, after which the regiment had no badge until it adopted the "Crossed Axes" in 1900. Following the example of the 128th Pioneers, a cross-belt of brown leather, with a pouch and whistle, and having a Pioneer badge in front, was introduced for British and Indian Officers. The 121st, 12th and 48th Pioneers did not adopt this cross-belt.

Note on dress.—The original facings of the regiment were blue, with yellow lace. In 1793 the facings were changed to yellow, and in 1808 to white. "Up to 1803 the regiment was clothed in 'purpet,' 'cholnas,' and sandals, the turbans having a cockade." The "cholnas," or short drawers, worn in the Bombay Army were shorter than those in the Bengal Army. The "Black Officers" of the Bombay Army had been ordered to wear boots in 1769.

Capt. Innes Munro, 73rd Highlanders, wrote the following description of the Sepoy Battalions as seen by him 1780-84:—"It is hardly credible, though true, that few troops in Europe cut a better appearance on parade; and . . . when led on by European Officers, they behave in the field with astonishing conduct and intrepidity. Their uniforms have a very military appearance, consisting of a red Light-infantry jacket, a white waistcoat, and a blue turban placed in a soldier-like manner upon the head, edged round with tape of the same colour with the facings. The sepoy has a long blue sash lightly girded round his loins, the end of

which, passing between his legs, is fastened behind. He wears a pair of white drawers, tightly fitting, which only come half down his thigh, and, being coloured at the lower end with blue dye, appear as if scoloped all round : a pair of sandals upon his feet, white cross belts, a firelock and bayonet, complete the sepoy's dress."

"The dress of the black officers is much the same, with this difference only, that their coats are made of scarlet cloth, with tinsel epaulets, light drawers all the way down to their ankles, and a large crooked scimitar by their sides. All words of command are given in English; and each battalion has a good corps of drums and fifes."

In 1804 a cloth jacket and pantaloons were issued, the latter, however, were discontinued in 1806, having been found to be unsuited to the native soldier; the date of their reintroduction is not on record. In the year 1809 the clothing was received "with the buttons struck with the number of the regiment." This is the description of the original turban : "The basis made of iron, two lines united by bars and covered with blue purpet, ornamented with a brass band and cockade." In 1805 the turban was altered, the basis being of basket work in the shape of a cone, with a brass front bearing the number of the regiment, a brass cockade and a cotton band round the bottom of the turban. After this the turban was frequently altered by the orders of various Commanders-in-Chief.

For many years a scarlet coatee, trimmed with lace, white or black cloth trousers, and a shako were worn in full-dress. This battalion's Records say that tunics were first issued in 1858, and serge trousers in 1866. A Kilmarnock forage cap was worn in "un-dress," around which cap a white pugri was bound for full-dress.

12TH PIONEERS (THE KELAT-I-GHILZIE REGIMENT). General Order No. 174, dated 20th February, 1891, reads as follows :—"Her Majesty the Queen, Empress of India, has been graciously pleased to approve formally of the Twelfth, The Kelat-i-Ghilzie, Regiment of Bengal Infantry being permitted, in commemoration of its distinguished conduct at the defence of the Fort of Kelat-i-Ghilzie, in Afghanistan, in the year 1842, to continue to bear on its regimental colour the device of a Mural Crown superscribed with the motto 'Invicta.'"

Although this device and motto had been associated with the regiment since the issue of the General Order

of 1842, quoted on page 21, yet it is not on record for how long these had been used as its crest and motto. The battalion had the word "Kelat-i-Ghilzie" as part of its title since 1842, with the exception of the period from 1861 to 1864.

Note on dress.—The battalion's "Digest of Services" contains no mention of the uniform worn at various periods, and the author has failed to discover how the battalions of Shah Shuja's Contingent were clothed during the 1st Afghan War. A drawing by Lieut. Pulley (father of the late Major H. C. Pulley, C.I.E., 12th Pioneers) of the dress worn by the regiment at the time of the 2nd Afghan War appears amongst the illustrations. The 12th Pioneers had black facings.

THE 128TH PIONEERS did not possess any special badge until they adopted the "Crossed Axes" on becoming Pioneers in 1888.

In 1894 the Secretary of State for India "sanctioned, as an Honorary Distinction, the adoption by the 28th Bombay Pioneers of 'Progredior' as a motto."

Note on dress.—The facings of the regiment on being raised in 1846 were pale yellow, which were later changed to white. In 1854 the Shako was abolished and "Leather chin straps for un-dress and the brass chain ones for full-dress to be worn with the present forage cap." In the same year the men's equipment was changed to black by varnishing. Extract from an Inspection Report of 1858: "The wearing of forage caps cocked on one side may give a jaunty appearance, but it is not military and should not be permitted in any case." In September, 1860, khaki pugris were introduced. In 1862 it was ordered "Native Officers to wear the red serge coat and sash on all duties on which the shell jacket was formerly worn, to let their dress on parade resemble that of their European Officers." In 1863 European Officers were permitted to wear the Staff Helmet on route marching and fatigue duties. In 1866, "The wearing of pugris by the European Officers with the forage cap is discontinued, and white cotton covers to the Staff Helmet to be introduced." In the same year it was ordered that the European Officers should wear summer clothing of a pattern similar to that in use with European regiments, and the white cotton trousers, formerly discontinued, to be kept. Also, "A supply of new Kilmarnock forage caps for the men received direct from Scotland." In 1869 blue serge trousers of a new pattern, with a red stripe, and braces were issued. The introduction of khaki clothing for the 2nd Afghan War has been referred to in Chapter VII.

In 1888 the regiment received the Pioneer F. S. Equipment, which is described in Chapter I. A neater and handier pattern of this equipment was introduced later, which is illustrated in the Frontispiece. In full-dress the officers adopted a brown leather cross-belt, instead of the sash.

THE 48TH PIONEERS originally had for their crest two crossed rifles, two crossed felling-axes, a crown, the figure 48 and a scroll incised "Bengal Pioneers"; the idea being to emphasize that the unit combined the rôle of fighting and engineering. Later the rifles were omitted in order that the crest should be less cumbersome.

The 48th wore a large six-pointed star, embossed with crossed-axes, on their pugris in full dress, which was given up when they became the 4th Bn. 2nd Bombay Pioneers. The "crossed-axes" worn by officers of the 48th were of a smaller size than those worn in the battalions formerly of the Bombay Army, and were of silver instead of brass. When the 48th Pioneers had to give up their "Star" and their black facings on becoming one of the battalions of the 2nd Bombay Pioneer group, all the battalions of the 2nd Bombay Pioneers adopted the "crossed-axes" badge as worn by the 48th Pioneers.

Note on dress of all battalions.—In about 1904 a long red blouse, or "kurta," was introduced for Indian ranks, in place of the tunic. This was worn with a kamarband (i.e. waist-sash) of different colours for each battalion, and each battalion had a full-dress pugri of varying colours. The Indian Officers of the 12th and 48th wore the "kurta" for a period (*vide* Frontispiece), and were later dressed in tunics like the British Officers, but the Indian Officers of the other three battalions kept to the tunic.

The length of the khaki coat varied at different times. During the Great War it was a long blouse, but later this was changed for a short coat as worn by British troops. In France a long serge blouse of a dark greenish shade of khaki was introduced after a time.

After the War, khaki was worn both for full-dress and field parades.

In modern times the mufti walking-out dress was a long white coat, worn with baggy white pyjamas for Mussalmans and white

trousers for Hindus, black shoes, a swagger-cane, and a white pugri. The Pathans, however, in mufti wore a black pugri and waistcoat. The pugri, both in uniform and mufti, was tied in a different manner by each class company.

THE CORPS OF BOMBAY PIONEERS. The following devices and mottoes were officially granted to the Corps, as a whole :—

“ Progredior ”

An Anchor and Laurel Wreath, with Motto in Hindustani corresponding to “ Per mare per terram.”

A Mural Crown superscribed “ Invicta.”

The badge of “ crossed-axes,” however, continued to be worn on the collar in uniform, and the crest on stationery, etc., was also the “ crossed-axes,” the 1st Battalion using the motto “ Per mare per terram,” the 2nd Battalion using “ Invicta,” and the Corps Headquarters “ Progredior.”

(Examples of these various devices are given amongst the illustrations.)

APPENDIX 5

BANDS

The Marine Battalion and the 4th Battalion of Bombay Sepoys had Drummers and Fifers on their respective establishments of 1777 and 1788, and it is not known when their Brass Bands were started.

The Marine Battalion had both a Brass and a String Band, which reached a high standard of efficiency in Bombay, where the String Band was particularly popular for playing at the Yacht Club, at dances and at various functions. Goanese were enlisted to play the stringed instruments, and they also performed in the Brass Band. The Bandmaster was a civilian paid by the Band Fund, the best known one being Mr. Mallandane, formerly Bandmaster of a British regiment. After the 121st left Bombay in 1903, the bands got fewer playing-out engagements, the Goanese became difficult to enlist, and the String Band gradually deteriorated until it was decided to abolish it.

On becoming the 10th Battalion 2nd Bombay Pioneers (Marine Battalion) the Brass Band was also done away with, and a band of Pipes and Drums was raised in its place. In full-dress the Pipers of the 10th Battalion wore blue doublets, blue pantaloons, white leggings and blue and white striped pugris, with tartan plaids and pipe streamers of "dark navy blue, with yellow and red stripes." (Sanctioned by Indian Army Order No. 600 of 1926.)

In October, 1922, the Brass Band of the 1st Battalion 2nd Bombay Pioneers (formerly 107th Pioneers) gave way to Pipes and Drums, the buglers on the establishment being trained both to bugle and play the drum.

Bugle marches were also played. The Pipers of the 1st Battalion wore khaki on all occasions and did not have plaids.

The Band of the 28th Bombay Infantry is first mentioned in 1849, when it accompanied the battalion on a march from Nasik to the Presidency (i.e. to Bombay). The 128th always maintained a Brass Band.

The 12th Bengal Infantry (The Kelat-i-Ghilzie Regiment) started their Brass Band in 1883. On becoming Pioneers this band was abolished in favour of Pipes and Drums. In full-dress the Pipers of the 12th wore green doublets with white lacing, green pugris, blue pantaloons and white gaiters, with plaids and pipe streamers of a tartan specially granted to the battalion. When they became the 2nd Battalion 2nd Bombay Pioneers the Pipers' uniform was changed to red tunics with white facings, blue pantaloons, white gaiters and blue pugris, with the same tartan plaids. This latter uniform was adopted for the Pipers of the 1st (Marine) Battalion, Corps of Bombay Pioneers.

The 48th Pioneers never had a Brass Band, preferring Pipes and Drums so as to avoid enlisting men other than the authorized classes of Sikhs and Jats. During several years the Pipers of the 48th were trained by Piper Caldwell of the Royal Scots Fusiliers, and they became a very fine band. The Pipers of the 48th had no special dress; they looked particularly well during the period the long red "kurta" was worn.

In Mesopotamia the Pipers were employed as stretcher bearers and several of them won distinctions. (*Vide* pages 221 and 235.)

The Buglers of the 48th Pioneers were trained by the 60th Rifles and reached a high standard of efficiency, Bugler Wazir Singh, in particular, being such a fine performer on the bugle that officers often came out of the Mess to listen to him. On the disbandment of the 4th Battalion (formerly 48th Pioneers) in 1926, some of their Pipers were transferred to the 1st, 2nd and 10th Battalions.

Additional music on the march was provided in those battalions enlisting Pathans by the "serinies and doles" of the Pathan companies. All battalions encouraged the men to sing on the march, the Mahrattas being specially fond of doing so.

On the formation of the Corps of Bombay Pioneers, it was decided that the Brass Band of the 3rd Battalion 2nd Bombay Pioneers (formerly 128th) should go to the new 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion, and the best of the Pipers and Drummers of the 1st, 2nd and 10th Battalions should form the band of the new 1st (Marine) Battalion. This band was for a time much over authorized strength.

The tunes used as regimental marches were :—

12th Pioneers (pipes) "The Barren Rocks of Aden."
In 1913 changed to "My Native Highland House."

48th „ (pipes) "Bonny Dundee."

107th „ (brass) "Men of Harlech."

121st „ (brass) "The Cornriggs are Bonny."

In 1926 the Pipes adopted
"Bonny Dundee" as a token
of regard for the disbanded
4th Battalion.

128th „ (brass) "Garry Owen."

Corps of Bombay Pioneers.

1st (Marine) Battalion

(pipes) "My Native Highland House."

2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie)

Battalion (brass) "Garry Owen."

APPENDIX 6.

FACSIMILE OF HEADING OF A PAGE OF THE INDIAN ARMY LIST
OF OCTOBER, 1932.

(Reproduced by permission of the Government of India.)

*Uniform—Scarlet.**Facings—White.***The Corps of Bombay Pioneers.***"Progredior."*AN ANCHOR AND LAUREL WREATH, WITH MOTTO IN HINDUSTANI CORRESPONDING TO "*Per mare per terram.*"A MURAL CROWN SUPERSCRIBED *Insicita.*

"Mysoore" "Persian Gulf" "Goodenoe" "Serlingapatam" "Boni See Ali" "Burma" "Aden" "Kelat-i-Ghilzie"
 "Gandahar, 1842" "Chuznee, 1842" "Cabool, 1842" "Maharajpore" "Hyderabad" "Punjab" "Abyssinia" "Kandahar, 1880" "Afghanistan, 1878-80" "Tolrek" "Swakin, 1885" "Burma, 1885-87" "Tirah" "Punjab Frontier"
 "Afghanistan 1819."

The Great War—"Fortuport, 1914-15" "Givenchy, 1914" "Nerve Chapello" "Aubers" "Loos" "France and Flanders, 1914-15" "Suez Canal" "Egypt, 1915" "Megiddo" "Sharon" "Palestine, 1918" "Basra" "Shaliba" "Kut al Amara, 1918" "17" "Cheshbon" "Defence of Kut al Amara" "Tigra, 1916" "Baghdad" "Khan Baghdad" "Mesopotamia, 1914-18" "Marr" "Pondia, 1918-19" "N. W. Frontier India, 1916-17" "Beluchistan, 1918".

Class Composition.

Each Bn. consists of 33½ Lobana Sikhs, 33½ Mahrattas, 33½ Meos (Rajputana, U. P. and E. Punjab). Corps Head-quarters, 1st (Marine) Battalion and 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion were formed by the amalgamation of the following battalions of and Bombay Pioneers:—

1st Battalion.—Raised in 1788 as the 4th Battalion of Bombay Sepoys. Became the 1st Batt., 4th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry in 1796; the 7th Regt. of Bombay N. I. in 1824; the 7th Regt. of Bombay Infantry in 1885; the 7th Bombay Infantry (Pioneers) in 1900; the 7th Bombay Pioneers in 1901; 107th Pioneers, 1903; 1st Bn., 2nd Bombay Pioneers, 1922.

2nd Battalion.—Raised at Ludhiana in 1833, by Capt. W. E. Beatson, as the 3rd Regiment of Infantry, Shah Shuiah's Force. Became the Regiment of Kelat-i-Ghilzie, 1842; the 13th Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry, 1861; the 12th Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry, 1861; the 12th (the Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment of Bengal Native Infantry, 1864; the 19th (the Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment of Bengal Infantry, 1885; 12th Pioneers (the Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Regiment, 1903; 2nd Bn., 2nd Bombay Pioneers (Kelat-i-Ghilzie), 1922.

3rd Battalion.—Raised at Ahmednagar in 1846, by Lieut.-Col. K. Taylor, as the 28th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry. Became the 28th Regiment of Bombay Infantry in 1885; the 28th (Pioneer) Regiment of Bombay Infantry in 1888; the 28th Bombay Pioneers in 1901; 128th Pioneers, 1903; 3rd Bn., 2nd Bombay Pioneers, 1922.

10th Battalion.—*The Marine Battalion.*—Raised at Bombay, in 1777, as the Marine Battalion. Became the 1st or Marine Battalion, 11th Regiment of Bombay Native Infantry, 1818; the 21st or Marine Bn., 1824; "The Marine Battalion," 1824; the 21st Regt. of Bombay Native Infantry (The Marine Battalion), 1861; the 21st Regiment of Bo. Infantry (the Marine Battalion), 1885; the 21st Bombay Infantry (the Marine Battalion), 1901; the 21st Bombay Pioneers, 1903; 121st Pioneers, 1903; 10 Bn., 2nd Bombay Pioneers (Marine Battalion), 1922.

Present designation, 1929.

Corps Headquarters' Kirkee.—*Arrived*
 1st (Marine) Battalion Nowshera.—*Arrived 6 Mar. '32.*
 2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion Kirkee.—*Arrived*

COLONEL—Col. (temp. Brigr.) Neil C. Bannatyne, C.I.E., p.s.c., I. A. 3 July 31.

N.B.—As the battle-honour "Somaliland, 1901-04," was not granted until the 3rd December, 1932, it never appeared in the Army List.

CIVIL CONTRACTS.

List is only of the more important Contracts undertaken up to 1914, and does not include road-making, barrack building, etc., done under military orders.

Date.	Pioneers.	Locality.	Work.	Details.
1892 .. 28th ..	Nichugard-Manipur ..	Constructing cart road	Public Works Department. <i>Vide page 151.</i>	
1901-2 .. 28th ..	Khushalgarh-Kohat-Thal..	Making new railway	Under Chief Engineer for construction of K.-K.-T. Rly. Earthwork, rock blasting and platelaying.	
1903-4 .. 48th ..	Agra-Delhi	Earthwork and platelaying on Chord Railway.	54 miles of railway, earthwork and platelaying. Bridge built. Pace of 1½ miles p.d. at plate-laying was reached.	
1904 .. 121st .. (1 dble-coy.).	Kirkee	Branch railway line to Kirkee Arsenal		
1904 .. 48th ..	Dogadda-Lansdown ..	Widening and improving road ..	P.W.D. Large amount of dry stone retaining walls.	
1905-6 .. 121st ..	Neral-Materan	Constructing light railway	Contractor—Mr. Adamji Peerbhoy of Bombay. Rise from Neral to Matheran is 2,000 feet, and considerable amount of railroad had to be cut from side of precipices. A tunnel and several bridges constructed. Platelaying. Several fatal accidents from blasting, Subadar Narainrao Jadhav blinded and Capt. Greig injured.	
1905 .. 48th .. (1 dble-coy.).	Bareilly-Sorow Railway ..	Platelaying	G.I.P. Rly. Tramway laid down for removing earth.	
1907-8 .. 12th ..	Jhansi	Railway embankment	G.I.P. Rly.	
1907 .. 107th .. (1 dble-coy.).	Lanauli-Kirkee	Doubling railway track	G.I.P. Rly.	
1907 .. 12th .. (1 dble. coy.)	Near Jhansi	Gurmhow Canal	P.W.D. Excavating and rock blasting.	
1908 .. 107th ..	Poona-Kirkee road ..	Removing portion of Bund Hill ..	A small contract and the only one which proved financially unsatisfactory.	
1908 .. 107th .. (2 dble-coys.).	Raichur	Railway work	Relaying railway line, ballasting and constructing new bridge.	
1910 .. 121st .. (1 dble-coy.).	Quetta	Earthwork for Nar Nullah Irrigation Scheme.	P.W.D. Companies at work changed from time to time.	
1910 .. 128th .. (2 dble-coys.).	Gajranwala-Chalpur ..	Railway construction.. ..		
1911 .. 12th .. (2 dble-coys.).	Bombay	Excavating for new Alexandra Docks	Contractors—Messrs. Price, Wills and Reeves, who, with the Bombay Port Trust, guaranteed pensions in case of accidents.	
1911 .. 48th ..	Allahabad-Rai-Bareilly Chord Rly.	Platelaying		
1912-13 .. 48th .. (3 dble-coys.).	Mishmi and Dibong Valleys	Road making	Base at Sediya in upper Assam. Cart road in plains and for pack-mules in hills up the valleys of Dibong and Lohit rivers, tributaries of the Brahmaputra, to near the Chinese border. Great difficulties from shale slopes and phenomenal rainfall, causing floods. Number of deaths from landslides and drowning. Much equipment and stores lost in floods.	
1913 .. 12th .. (1 dble-coy.).	Near Satara.. ..	Foundations for piers of Mahuli bridge.	P.W.D.	
1913 .. 12th .. (1 dble-coy.).	Dhond-Baramuti Railway..	Platelaying	G.I.P. Rly.	
1913 .. 12th .. (3 dble-coys.).	Bhatgarh, near Poona ..	Foundations for dam at Lake Whiting	P.W.D. Named "The Lloyd Dam." It is the biggest dam in the world.	
1913 .. 121st .. Detachment	Kacha, near Persian border	Barracks	M.W.S. Constructed of sun-dried bricks, made by the detachment.	

APPENDIX 8.

LIST OF COMMANDANTS.

(The correct names of the battalions at various dates are given in Appendix 1.)

Marine Battalion.

(121st).

1777.	Capt. James Jameson.	1844.	Capt. R. St. John.
1779.	Lieut. Hudson.	1846.	" J. E. Parsons.
	Capt. Samber.	1847.	" Shephard.
1780.	" Moore.	1848.	" H. Rolland.
1787.	" K. McPherson.		" E. H. Hart.
1790.	" Bellicis.	1855.	" C. M. Barrow.
1791.	" W. Williamson.	1858.	" W. L. Cahusac.
1796.	Major T. Marshall.	1860.	" C. M. Barrow.
1797.	" W. Horne.	1861.	" G. A. Leckie.
	" W. Williamson.		Major S. Thacker.
1798.	" H. P. Lawrence.	1864.	" Muter.
1799.	" Fife.	1866.	Lt.-Col. S. Thacker.
1800.	" Buchanan.	1870.	" W. L. Cahusac.
1802.	Lt.-Col. W. Williamson.	1871.	" S. Thacker.
1804.	Major R. Hunt.	1874.	" T. Thatcher.
1807.	" R. Lewis.		Colonel A. Carnegie.
1811.	" Hornby.	1881.	Lt.-Col. G. F. Beville.
1812.	" J. Lyall.	1889.	" C. C. Pemberton.
1817.	Lieut. W. Black.	1890.	" F. H. Forjett.
	Capt. F. Farquharson.	1894.	" A. B. Mein.
1818.	Major K. Egan.	1900.	" W. F. Cahusac.
	Lt.-Col. G. Llewellyn.	1907.	" L. M. Foster.
1819.	" G. McKinochie.		Major C. G. Carnegie.
1823.	Lieut. L. Clarke.	1910.	Lt.-Col. F. C. Laing.
	Major Brooks.	1915.	" F. A. Andrew.
1824.	" N. C. Man.	1916.	" H. P. Keelan, D.S.O.
1826.	Capt. F. Hicks.	1921.	" A. C. S. B. Ellis,
1833.	" T. C. Parr.		C.B.E.
1835.	" P. I. Mant.	1923.	" F. E. W. Baldwin.
1838.	" J. H. Chalmers.	1927.	" G. A. Clarke.

107th.

1788.	Capt. James Valentine.	1825.	Major T. Morgan.
1796.*	Major W. Home.	1828.	Capt. Massy.
1797.	" Arthur Disney.	1832.	Lt.-Col. Rooome.
1800.	Lt.-Col. J. MacDonald.	1835.	" Morgan.
	Capt. J. P. Dickinson.	1837.	" M. Bagnold.
1802.	Lt.-Col. J. Drummond.	1838.	" Spiller.
1809.	Capt. W. Hull.	1839.	" Dunsterville.
1813.	Major J. B. Watson.	1841.	Major T. C. Parr.
1821.	Capt. G. Tweedy.	1846.	Lt.-Col. T. Crawley.

* Lt.-Col Matthew Murray, appointed to 1/4th in 1796, does not appear to have joined.

1850.	Lt.-Col. T. C. Parr.	1899.	„ W. St. L. Chase,
	Major J. Cooper.		V.C. C.B.
1856.	„ H. Stiles.	1902.	„ P. J. H. Aplin,
1857.	„ E. Andrews.		D.S.O.
1862.	Lt.-Col. E. H. S. Bowdich.	1909.	„ C. G. Carnegy,
1874.	Colonel J. A. S. Faulknor.		M.V.O.
1875.	Lt.-Col. A. F. Battye.	1914.	Lt.-Col. N. M. C. Stevens,
1882.	Colonel C. S. Stuart.		C.M.G.
1886.	„ E. Cunningham.	1918.	„ W. W. Bickford,
1887.	Lt.-Col. P. H. Greig.		C.I.E., D.S.O.
1893.	„ H. E. Penton.	1922.	Lt.-Col. R. D. Marjoribanks.
		1926.	„ W. B. P. Tugwell.

2nd Bn. (107th).

1917-20. Lt.-Col. C. C. Cunningham, D.S.O.

12th

(Kelat-i-Ghilzie).

1838.	Capt. W. F. Beatson.	1899.	Lt.-Col. F. B. Mein.
	„ J. H. Craigie, C.B.	1903.	„ F.B.W. Richardson.
1852.	„ R. McKean.	1910.	„ J. R. Hill.
1854.	Lieut. Doran.	1914.	„ W. C. Black, C.I.E.
1855.	„ G. C. Rowcroft.		Major W. A. K. Campbell.
1856.	Capt. G. E. Holmes.	1916.	Lt.-Col. J. S. Hooker.
1857.	„ C. F. Munday.	1920.	Major R. B. Boyce.
1859.	Lt.-Col. H. B. Stevens.	1921.	Lt.-Col. C. W. Neumann.
1875.	Colonel R. H. Price.	1925.	Colonel G. W. Cochran,
1881.	„ W. McDonald.		D.S.O.
1885.	„ H. A. Little.		
1891.	Lt.-Col. A. F. Barrow,		
	C.M.G., D.S.O.		

2nd Bn. 12th.

1917.	Lt.-Col. W. C. W. Hawkes, D.S.O.
1919.	„ G. A. Clarke.
1919-21.	„ C. W. Neumann.

128th.

1846.	Colonel R. Taylor.	1893.	Lt.-Col. Rawdon E. D.
1847.	Major H. Lyons.		Reilly.
1850.	Lt.-Col. H. Roberts.	1902.	„ W. St. L. Chase,
1853.	„ J. G. Hume.		V.C., C.B.
1855.	„ Long.	1906.	„ G. A. Brownrigg.
	Bellasis.	1911.	„ A. H. D. Creagh,
1858.	Lt.-Col. A. N. Maclean.		C.M.G., M.V.O.
	D. M. Scobie.	1916.	„ F. A. Andrew,
1859.	„ N. P. MacDougall.		D.S.O.
1861.	„ G. C. Stockley.	1917.	„ N.G.B. Goodfellow.
1862.	Major C. Hodgkinson.	1920.	„ A. C. S. B. Ellis,
1867.	Lt.-Col. W. F. Anderson.		C.B.E.
1869.	„ C. A. Moyle.	1921.	Colonel N. G. B. Good-
1875.	„ T. Thatcher.		fellow, C. I. E.
1876.	Colonel R. Baigre, C.B.	1924.	Lt.-Col. D. S. Graham.
1877.	Lt.-Col. T. R. Nimmo, C.B.	1928.	„ D. B. Gray,
1884.	„ F. C. Singleton.		O.B.E., M.C.
1886.	„ R. Westmacott,		
	C.B., D.S.O.		

2nd Bn. 128th.

1918. Lt.-Col. H. W. Ashburner, D.S.O.
 1919. „ W. L. S. Meiklejohn.
 1921. „ H. W. Tobin, D.S.O., O.B.E.

48th.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1901. Lt.-Col. C. le G. Justice. | 1921. Lt.-Col. G. Hewett, D.S.O. |
| 1908. „ T. Webster. | 1922. „ M. E. S. Johnson, |
| 1909. „ C. W. Somerset, | D.S.O. |
| M.V.O. | 1924. „ G. E. P. Davis, |
| 1913. Colonel A. J. N. Harward, | O.B.E. |
| C.B. | |
| 1916. Lt.-Col. R. J. Cumming, | |
| D.S.O., O.B.E. | |

2nd Bn. 48th.

1918. Lt.-Col. G. Hewett, D.S.O.

The Corps of Bombay Pioneers.

1st (Marine) Battalion.

1929. Lt.-Col. W. B. P. Tugwell.
 „ A. Alexander, M.C.
 1930. „ M. C. Coote.
 1932. „ A. K. Macpherson, M.V.O.

2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion.

1929. Lt.-Col. D. B. Gray, O.B.E., M.C.
 1932. Major B. H. Wallis, M.C.

Corps Headquarters.

1929. Lt.-Col. G. A. Clarke.
 1932. „ M. C. Coote.
 Major E. H. B. Ozanne.

APPENDIX 9

THE 12TH PIONEERS MACHINE GUN SECTION IN
EASTERN PERSIA

By MAJOR E. P. YEATES

TOWARDS the end of July, 1915, while the 12th Pioneers were stationed in Quetta, I received orders to take the Machine Gun Section to Eastern Persia. The Germans were endeavouring to send small parties, composed chiefly of officers, across Persia into Afghanistan with the object of stirring up trouble; accordingly we were forming a cordon along the Afghan frontier, in Persian territory, in order to intercept them. This involved watching a sector of about 300 miles, from Robat to Birjand, north of which the Russians took over responsibility. (*Vide* Map No. 4.) To hold this line, there was half a battalion of the 19th Punjabis already at Kacha; the 28th Light Cavalry had shortly before been sent out to join them, mounted on camels instead of horses; a section of an Indian Mountain Battery followed later.

On arrival at Nushki, then railhead, I found I was to take command of a supply column of 400 camels, escorted by 50 men of the 19th Punjabis under Lieut. Chalmers, and accompanied by an I.M.S. officer. After two days' delay, while the S. and T. authorities divided the loads amongst the Baluch camel drivers, the column started in the evening on its 360-mile march across the desert. Just as the last camel was straggling off, the daily train from Quetta came in, so Chalmers and I seized the opportunity to have a final iced whisky and soda before starting. It was fifteen months before I had another one; for Chalmers it was the last he ever had; he was killed in a skirmish nine months later.

Marching at night to avoid the intense heat, we reached Kacha in three weeks without incident. There I found a detachment of the 19th Punjabis under two Second-Lieutenants, the main body having moved up to Seistan with the 28th Light Cavalry. Included in the detachment of the 19th were about 60 Afridis who were suspected of sympathising with the Turks. I found orders awaiting me that on my arrival I was to send them back to India in two parties. Accordingly I despatched the first party, about thirty strong under an N.C.O., with a convoy of camels returning unloaded.



GORGE ON TRACK FROM KACHA TO ROBAT.

Reproduced from "East Persia" by Brig.-General W. E. R. Dickson.
(*Edward Arnold & Co.*)

A few days later I received news that this party, smarting under this reflection on their loyalty, after three marches had seized some camels from the convoy and struck off for Afghanistan. This meant that they would have to cross about 80 miles of absolute desert before reaching the Helmund, which runs parallel to the Robat trade route. This strip is completely waterless, with the exception of the Hamun, a saline and undrinkable lake, which might be seen shimmering tantalisingly in the heat; ignorance of its nature, no doubt, led them to embark on their rash venture. Local opinion was that at this, the hottest, time of the year, they would not get through, unless they had taken ample supplies of water with them. It was essential, therefore, to round up any survivors who might turn back and to recover the arms of any who might perish. Naturally the news of their desertion spread like wildfire, and every ruffian within 100 miles licked his lips at the thought of thirty good rifles lying in the desert; they were not likely to remain there long. The matter was taken over by the Political Agent, who sent out parties of levies from the nearest post on the trade route, with adequate supplies of water. They found the Afridis on the edge of the Hamun, dead to a man. Expecting to be able to refill their vessels at the Hamun, they had evidently used up their drinking water, and had paid the penalty of their mistake.

There now arose the problem of what to do with the Afridis still at Kacha. The situation was somewhat awkward; thirty hard-bitten Afridis, their faces blackened by the suspicion of their officers and the conduct of their fellows, amidst about sixty raw recruits; my machine gunners were almost the only fully-trained men in the post. After much telegraphing I received orders to dispatch them unarmed to India, which I did. I was relieved to see them go. They reached Quetta safely, where they were discharged.

After this incident the section spent an uneventful six months in Kacha and Robat, acting as support to the 28th Light Cavalry and 19th Punjabis, who were playing hide-and-seek with the Germans in Seistan, generally with success, as they prevented most of the parties entering Afghanistan, and captured a German officer. Early in 1916, Brigadier General R. E. H. Dyer, of Amritsar fame, was placed in command of the operations; he travelled out from Quetta by car, the first that had ever traversed these deserts. About this time the tribesmen of the Sarhad began to give trouble, attacking our convoys on their way out from India to Kacha. Their exploits culminated in a raid in which they seized a large amount of stores, and killed General Dyer's charger, which was following him out. Accordingly, leaving the bulk of the Cavalry and the 19th Punjabis to hold the cordon along the Afghan frontier, the General scraped together what details he could, and moved down to Kacha to deal with the matter.

The Sarhad is the name given to the wild and mountainous district in Persian Baluchistan, which lies south-east of Robat. It extends from Jalk in the east to Galugan in the west, a couple of hundred miles across, and about the same distance from north to south. The principal feature is the Koh-i-Taftan, a volcano rising above 13,000 feet, the remainder being a tangle of hills, interspaced with a few elevated plains. The inhabitants are almost entirely nomadic, and live in black goat-hair tents; Khwash, Gusht and Jalk being the only villages of any importance. The principal tribes are, to the east, the Gumshadzai, whose chief was Halil Khan; in the centre the Yarmohammedzai, whose chief, Jiand Khan, was generally looked upon as the overlord of the whole district; and to the west the Ismailzai, under Juma Khan, while to the north lie the Rekis, generally friendly to the British. Living in a barren and waterless country, the chief wealth of the tribes consisted of flocks of sheep and goats, which grazed in the hills; their favourite occupation was raiding. They could muster over 4,000 fighting men, mostly well armed, owing to their proximity to the gun-running route from the Persian Gulf. They conducted their raids with great boldness in Persian territory, often over distances of three or four hundred miles, carrying off, along with other loot, numbers of Persian women and children as slaves; now however, at the instigation of German agents, they began to devote their attention to the Robat trade route, which flanks their territory on the north.

Hoping to settle the matter peaceably, General Dyer's first move was to summon the chiefs and the leading tribesmen to meet him at Kacha, early in April, 1916. All but the Rekis disregarded this invitation; he therefore decided it was necessary to force his way into their country.

Now commenced a miniature campaign, conducted under heavy odds and difficulties, which was remarkable for its bluff and daring. With his boldness, initiative and profound knowledge of native psychology, General Dyer was an ideal leader for such an undertaking. The force he was able to muster consisted of 1 Section Mountain Battery, 1 troop, 28th Light Cavalry (now properly mounted, their horses having been sent out during the cold weather), 1 Machine Gun Section, 12th Pioneers, and about 70 men of the 19th Punjabis, under an Indian Officer, of whom only 9 were fully trained, the remainder being raw recruits. When a guard for his necessarily large baggage column had been detailed, his striking force was reduced to infinitesimal proportions.

General Dyer was not the man to be deterred by such trifles. By skilfully disseminating false information he led the tribesmen to think that he intended to attack Halil Khan and the Gumshadzais on the eastern extremity; he then rapidly marched on Khwash, the stronghold of Jiand Khan and his Yarmohammedzais. Khwash lies six marches from Kacha. The first two marches

were made without opposition, but on the third a considerable body of tribesmen, hastily collected by Jiand, were encountered. An endeavour was made, by means of a messenger, to come to terms without fighting; during the parley General Dyer skilfully kept his troops under cover, his great anxiety being lest the enemy should discover the smallness of his force.

Negotiations, however, came to nothing and the General decided on action. Sending the cavalry troop round a flank, he ordered the mountain and machine guns to open fire, and himself led forward about a dozen Punjabis to the attack. Ignorant of the effect of artillery and machine gun fire, a group of tribesmen were gathered round Jiand and, for the first and last time in the campaign, presented an excellent target. The first burst of fire killed half-a-dozen men, including one of Jiand's sons. Shaken by the execution wrought by these hitherto unknown weapons, and imagining themselves opposed by large numbers, the tribesmen soon broke. The cavalry pursued them hotly, but were surprised to find that over the rocky going the Baluch camels were able to show a clean pair of heels to their horses. Taking full advantage of this success, the General pushed on to Khwash, and, by threatening to destroy his standing crops, induced Jiand to surrender. Then, making full play of the fact that Jiand Khan had been defeated and had surrendered, he bluffed Halil Khan, the resolute and able chief of the Gumshadzais, into coming in to make his peace. Next he marched against Juma Khan, who with his Ismailzais had recently made a raid towards Siestan, in the course of which he had fought a stiff action with a party of the 19th Punjabis, killing a number of them, including Lieut. Chalmers, before withdrawing. Seeing that both Jiand and Halil Khan had made peace, and were accompanying the General, Juma Khan decided to make terms. On his presenting himself his straightforward bearing made a favourable impression.

General Dyer now decided that, in order that the chiefs should understand that his wishes were not to be flouted, they should accompany him back to Kacha, and thus obey the summons they had originally disregarded. Accordingly, taking them and some of the leading men along with him, he started back, but, somewhat rashly, left five sepoy and some friendly Rekis in the old fort at Khwash to show the flag. On arrival at Kacha he held a Durbar, entered into agreements with the chiefs, presented them with cash subsidies, and dismissed them, hoping that the problem of the Sarhad was now settled.

This unfortunately was not the case. The very next day a spy hastened in with the news that, as soon as they got clear of Kacha, the chiefs had held a conference among themselves. Having seen the small number of troops in Kacha, they decided to repudiate their oaths, and to return to their own territories, gather together their forces, incidentally mopping up the five men at Khwash, and

then make a united attack on General Dyer. Juma Khan alone stood out and refused to break his word.

No time was to be lost if the men at Khwash were to be saved; accordingly the same column marched out next day. This time, however, the General decided that having reached Khwash the column should remain there; this involved taking along a large amount of supplies. We pushed on as fast as our baggage camels would permit, but when within three marches of Khwash the General, in his anxiety for the safety of the small garrison, decided to go ahead in his car, accompanied only by his chauffeur and a Levy as guide. His adventures on this trip would fill a chapter, the most characteristic perhaps being the impressment of a party of Yarmohammedzais to drag his car out of a sand drift in which it had become embedded. The fact that they were actually obeying Jiand's summons to come and attack us was not allowed to stand in the way; once they had got into parley they were soon convinced that the radiator of the car was a super machine gun, capable of emitting an incredible number of bullets; it was not long before they were straining at the drag-ropes. Suffice it to say that the General arrived safely at Khwash, and found the picket, aware of the concentration of tribesmen, anxiously awaiting relief. Of course the danger was by no means averted, but his arrival in an obviously diabolical machine probably gave the tribesmen pause, and the following day, just as they were on the point of attacking, the troops arrived. Small as the column was, the situation was safe for the moment, as Khwash is situated in a plain five or six miles across, where the tribesmen would not risk facing machine gun fire, of which they already had had some experience.

Now that he was in occupation of Sarhad territory, General Dyer again summoned the chiefs. Seeing that he had forestalled their plans by his prompt movement, they decided against overt hostilities for the present, and came in sulkily. The General gave them a stern warning against further treachery, and dismissed them. He then set about constructing an entrenched camp; in this work my handful of Pioneers proved particularly useful. Shortly afterwards, about the end of May, 1916, a squadron of the 28th Light Cavalry moved down from Seistan to reinforce the garrison. This increased the difficulties of supply, and by the time we had more or less constructed our entrenchments a shortage of fodder made itself felt. It was learned that there was a quantity of bhusa at a place eight miles distant called Kasimabad, where there was a small patch of cultivation, the owner of which was prepared to sell; the General arranged to purchase this. In order to encourage the inhabitants to produce any supplies they might have, he informed the owner that he would accompany the camels that went to fetch it, and pay him personally.

As he was on the point of setting out a spy came in and reported that Jiand had got wind of the General's intention, and, expecting

him to go with a small escort only, was planning to capture him. Accordingly the General paraded all available troops, including the mountain and machine guns and set out, prepared for all eventualities. Before we had got half way we were met by another spy, who reported that Jiand had set fire to the bhusa. This was serious news, as it entailed privations for the animals; highly incensed, the General pressed on. As we neared Kasimabad, we were met by Jiand, who, seeing the General had come in force, decided to change his tune, and blandly proclaimed his ignorance of the matter. The General received him coldly; he halted his troops on an open space, and taking Jiand and his Brigade-Major and about 25 men as escort along with him, went to inspect the damage. After viewing the ashes of the bhusa, he noticed a tree with a raised platform round it some distance away, so decided to take advantage of its shade while holding his enquiry. Having assembled the principal men of the place, he accused Jiand bluntly of the crime; Jiand of course denied it. Voices and tempers were raised; as the argument continued more and more armed tribesmen gathered round and gradually pressed forward. Feeling that the situation might become ugly, the General looked round towards where the column was halted, only to find it was hidden by a slight rise; he realised he had walked into a trap. Seeing their advantage the tribesmen became more and more truculent till one of them sprang up and reviled the General. The nearest tribesmen brought their rifles to the ready; in another moment they would have surged forward, but the General's quickness saved the situation. Seizing Jiand by the shoulders, he forced him to squat down, at the same time shouting to the Brigade-Major and the escort to disarm the tribesmen. The sepoys sprang forward and seized the rifles of the nearest tribesmen; the latter, looking to their chief for a lead, hesitated a moment and were lost. The remainder, seeing half their number disarmed, then sullenly gave up their arms. Disaster was averted by a hair's breadth.

Having thus turned the tables, the General hurriedly dispatched an orderly to call forward the column; on its arrival he arrested some forty of the most prominent tribesmen, including, of course, Jiand. The following day the column returned to Khwash with the prisoners. The problem of their disposal now arose. After their repeated treachery they could not be let go unpunished. There were no facilities for keeping them locally, so after much telegraphing it was decided to send them to India, Army Headquarters arranging to send two companies of the 106th Hazara Pioneers half way from Nushki to take them over. Accordingly a rendezvous was fixed and the prisoners were dispatched in the end of June in charge of an escort of one squadron 28th Light Cavalry, less one troop, the machine gun section 12th Pioneers and half a company, 19th Punjabis, under two British Officers of the 28th Light Cavalry. This was the largest force that could be spared.

I personally had to remain in Khwash, as I was performing various duties there.

General Dyer now felt he was in a fair way to settling the question of the Sarhad; once again he was to find that he was mistaken. Early next morning a sowar rode in on a lathered horse, bearing a letter from the O.C. escort. In it he reported that all the prisoners but three had escaped. On halting for the night he had roped the prisoners together, and surrounded them with a rough barbed wire entanglement. Under cover of darkness the prisoners managed to untie the ropes, and then, at an apparently prearranged signal, flinging their blankets over the barbed wire, threw themselves over it and escaped into the darkness. Out of the forty prisoners, only Jiand and one of his sons, who were under a separate guard, and one man whom one of my machine gunners grappled in the darkness, remained.

All our previous work was thus undone. The escaped prisoners would be more implacable than ever, and having rearmed themselves, would no doubt set about raising trouble. Wasting no time, General Dyer, accompanied by Major Sanders, his Brigade-Major, and a small detachment under my command, set out to rendezvous with the escort, and devise fresh plans. Towards evening we came up with them; the General decided to detach one troop 28th Light Cavalry, my Machine Gun Section, and a platoon of the 19th Punjabis from the escort, and ordered the O.C. to continue his march to Saindak with Jiand and the other two prisoners. With the object of overawing the Yarmohomedzais and preventing them from endeavouring to rescue Jiand, the General took the troops thus detached and marched off that night into the Yarmohomedzai country.

I was glad to be reunited to my Machine Gunners, but being the only officer available I also had to take charge of the various details. I thus had the distinction of having the General and his Brigade-Major, practically a complete Brigade Staff, to look after me. This is probably the only occasion in the annals of the British or Indian Armies on which the Staff outnumbered the Regimental officers by two to one!

After a couple of days' strenuous marching and demonstrating, without any tangible results, we were about to return to Khwash when more bad news arrived. The escaped prisoners, having reached their homes, paused only to rearm themselves, and, disregarding the threat of General Dyer's force, at once set off to rescue their chief. Meanwhile the O.C. the escort, a cavalryman, had pushed on trusting to speed for safety. Instead of laboriously piqueting the heights, a difficult matter with his small force, he relied on flanking patrols of cavalry scrambling along the hills. They found difficulty in keeping up with the column, consequently the tribesmen were able to lay a successful ambush. Letting the advanced guard go through, their first volley took the main body

at short range. Both British Officers fell seriously wounded and a number of men were hit. A party of tribesmen then made a bold rush, seized Jiand and the other two prisoners, and disappeared with them into the rocks. The plight of the escort was now serious; there was no British Officer left to take command, the narrow track was cumbered with dead and wounded horses and camels, and they were exposed to a hot fire from the surrounding hills. It would have gone ill with them but for the arrival of a Wireless Troop, escorted by a party of the 19th Punjabis, who were on their way out from India to join our force at Khwash, and who happened to reach the scene of action at the critical moment. Taken by surprise from the rear, the tribesmen soon beat a retreat, in possession, however, of their chief and the honours of war; one could not withhold admiration from their display of pluck and endurance. The Wireless Troop then gathered up the wounded and withdrew with them to Kacha, where they could receive medical attention.

On receipt of this news the General hastened back to Khwash. On arrival he immediately ordered Lt.-Col. Claridge to take a half squadron of the 28th Light Cavalry and about 50 of the 19th Punjabis and to march that evening towards Kacha to clear up the situation and escort the Wireless Troop back to Khwash. My machine guns remained to defend Khwash, but, there being no British Officer with the detachment of the 19th Punjabis, I was detailed to proceed with the column, in charge of the infantry; accordingly within an hour of my arrival in camp from one forced march, I had to set out again. After about four marches, in the course of which we passed the scene of the ambush, littered with the carcasses of horses and camels, we met the Wireless Troop and the remnant of the escort a march from Kacha. We also heard that the two companies of the 106th Hazara Pioneers, under Major Lang, who had been sent out to take over the prisoners, had been ordered to join General Dyer's command as a reinforcement. Accordingly we waited a couple of days for them to join us, and marched back to Khwash, where we found our entrenchments beleaguered by the gathering tribesmen.

General Dyer had now at his immediate disposal :

- 1 Section Mountain Battery,
- 1½ Squadrons 28th Light Cavalry,
- 1 Machine Gun Section, 12th Pioneers,
- 2 Companies, 106th Hazara Pioneers,
- About 100 men, 19th Punjabis,
- 1 Wireless Troop.

In comparison with the skeleton forces with which up till now he had been compelled to work, this was a large force. He therefore decided to take the offensive, and attack the tribesmen in their own hills. Accordingly leaving half a squadron 28th Cavalry, the

details of the 19th Punjabis, and the Wireless Troop to garrison Khwash, he marched out with the remainder of his force in the middle of July. He took along a month's supplies; this, of course, involved a large and vulnerable convoy.

On the arrival of our reinforcements Jiand and his Yarmohommedzais had withdrawn to their stronghold in the Morpeish Hills. The formation of these hills was roughly two parallel mountain ridges, running for about 70 miles from S.E. to N.W., separated by a narrow and elevated valley. It was only possible to obtain access at either end, the N.W. entrance at Dast Kird being the nearer to Khwash. Both entrances were guarded by narrow defiles, thus giving every advantage to the defender, who also had the benefit of interior lines. General Dyer therefore adopted a stratagem. He made his first march in the direction of the N.W. or nearer entrance, halting some 15 miles short of it. He then pushed his cavalry on in the same direction, ordering them to halt after dark and light fires, and then rejoin the main body. The General then changed direction, and set off early next morning for the S.E. entrance. The ruse succeeded; on seeing the fires lit by the cavalry, Jiand and his men hastened to take up their position in the threatened defile. Consequently while we were marching S.E. Jiand was marching N.W. and losing two marches start. On realising his mistake, he doubled back hurriedly; his superior mobility nearly enabled him to retrieve his position, but not quite; our force reached the S.E. entrance at Gusht a few hours before him. This enabled us to make good the first defile, and also to ensure the neutrality of the Gushtis, a small tribe owning the adjacent territory, who would otherwise have joined Jiand. In contrast to the majority of Sarhadis, who lived in tents and were here to-day and gone to-morrow, the Gushtis lived in a large village. This had a steadying effect on them and encouraged them to throw in their lot with the man on the spot.

The following day we began our advance into the hills with the object of capturing the large flocks of sheep and goats, which formed the tribesmen's chief wealth. This involved traversing the whole of the 70 mile defile, and emerging at the N.W. end at Dast Kird. We were soon hotly engaged, every hill being sprinkled with Yarmohommedzais. The ground was extremely difficult and we were hampered by our large supply column. The tribesmen had all the advantage, and picked off our men as they advanced to piquet the heights. By the end of the day we had advanced little more than a mile. Realising that to fight under such conditions was to court disaster, General Dyer took a bold decision. Instead of pushing on blindly, he determined to retire about a mile down the valley to a spot where the ground lent itself to the placing of piquets, and to allow the enemy to exhaust their ammunition in attacking our men behind sangars. He thus voluntarily embarked on what is generally considered the most

precarious operation in frontier warfare, a retreat in the face of the enemy, and gave them the encouragement of seeming success. He had, however, confidence in his troops.

Accordingly next day we withdrew, hotly pursued by the exulting tribesmen, and entrenched ourselves further down the valley. The heights were, of course, piqueted, but there were two low spurs running up to the camp which offered an easy approach for the enemy, if, by taking advantage of darkness, he were able to elude the higher piquets. These the General left unoccupied by daylight; after dark, however, he sent out two piquets, each consisting of 50 men of the Hazaras, to hold them.

The General's surmise proved correct. Shortly before dawn, the silence was broken by a single shot, quickly followed by a general outburst of musketry. Led by Halil Khan, generally considered the boldest fighter in the Sarhad, who with a few of his Gumshadzais had come to the assistance of the Yarmohomedzais, the tribesmen had planned to rush the camp before dawn. Unaware of the posting of the two piquets after dark, they had advanced in force between them. Thus they found themselves in a trap, with the high ground held all round them. They fought back gamely, but suffered severely from the accurate fire of the Hazaras. Their activity and skill in taking cover enabled many to slip away; by noon the fight was over and the survivors had disappeared leaving, amongst the slain, the redoubtable Halil Khan.

Next day, meeting no further resistance, we resumed our march through the 70 mile defile, with the object of capturing the enemy's flocks and so clinching our victory. After the first day's march, the defile opened out into an upland valley, which, apart from the lack of water, we could traverse with comparative ease. A couple of camps were completely waterless, a severe strain on the animals. About half-way through we came on the main flocks, and captured about 12,000 sheep and goats, with only the exchange of a few shots. Driving these along, we passed through the remainder of the defile, and returned in triumph to Khwash.

During the operations, my machine-guns were frequently engaged, chiefly in support of advancing and retiring piquets, but in such rocky country targets were difficult to find. Owing to the efficiency of the piqueting, the only casualty in the section was one mule wounded. The brunt of the fighting fell on the Hazaras. I should here like to pay a tribute to the gallantry and skill of a sister Pioneer battalion, which has now, alas, shared the fate of the rest of the corps. The Hazaras, accustomed from boyhood to mountain warfare, were ideal troops for such operations; every man knew instinctively what to do. When halted on the march for a few minutes, the Hazara sepoy, instead of just sitting down idly, would generally take out an oily rag and wipe over the action of his rifle, and then take a few snaps at some mark on the hillside; he did not intend to be caught unready. One of the piquets which

were so heavily engaged contained a Havildar who had won the Indian Army Rifle Championship at Meerut; with a spare rifle and a sepoy to act as loader, this man kept up a devastating fire, and probably effected as much execution as a platoon of average shots, unaccustomed to this type of warfare, would have done. With tribesmen scattered among the rocks, and exposing only a few inches of their heads, it is little use spraying the hillside with bullets; deadly accuracy is essential. The Indian Army is the poorer for the loss of such men.

The pacification of the Sarhad had now been largely, but not yet completely, accomplished. In the centre Jiand and his Yarmohomedzais had been defeated and deprived of their flocks; to the West Juma Khan and his Ismailzais had kept the promise which they had given to the General at the Kacha durbar, and had refrained from aggression; there still remained the Gums-hadzais on the Eastern boundary. Halil Khan, their chief, had been killed in the recent fighting, but the tribe as a whole had not been engaged. To complete the work, General Dyer felt it was necessary to obtain their submission; accordingly, after a few days rest in Khwash, he again led out the column, composed as before.

We again made for Gusht, and plunged into the hills behind it. Although the defile through which the column had to pass was extremely difficult, and so narrow that a loaded camel could not get through until the rock in places had been blasted away, no opposition was offered, and we debouched safely into the more open country about a march from Jalk, the headquarters of the Gumshadzai. Next day, on approaching Jalk, a message was received from the tribesmen suggesting a parley. After arranging for a neutral zone, the General consented to a meeting. His terms, however, though mild, were rejected after much discussion, and both sides withdrew, and prepared for hostilities.

Once again General Dyer resorted to a stratagem. In order to put the Gumshadzai off their guard, he withdrew his troops several miles. He then placed his baggage in camp under a guard, and bivouacked his striking force separately. At midnight the force was roused and marched on Jalk. So well was the secret kept that the General's servant brought his tea next morning, to find his bed empty. Having to rely on local guides and agents of doubtful fidelity, it was only by such secrecy that he could hope to effect a surprise.

Just before dawn the column reached Jalk. As the cavalry rode into the town confusion reigned, many men rushing out and escaping without their arms. We soon had the place in our possession; seeing that their women and children were in our hands, the tribesmen were not long in submitting. Having thus effected his object, almost without firing a shot, General Dyer marched back to Khwash.

The Sarhad was now definitely pacified, but General Dyer's health had suffered in the arduous operations, and he had to return to India on sick leave. In October, 1916, he was relieved by Colonel Tanner, who was now free to devote his attention to the situation further north in Persia, without anxiety for the safety of his communications. I was also invalided at the same time; General Dyer kindly gave me a seat in his car back to India, a privilege which involved responsibilities when, as often happened, we stuck in a sand drift and both had to get out and push. I handed over the section to Capt. Moore-Lane of the Hazaras. Some months later the guns, mules, and equipment were taken over by the 19th Punjabis, and the men returned to join their battalion at Peshawar.

APPENDIX 10

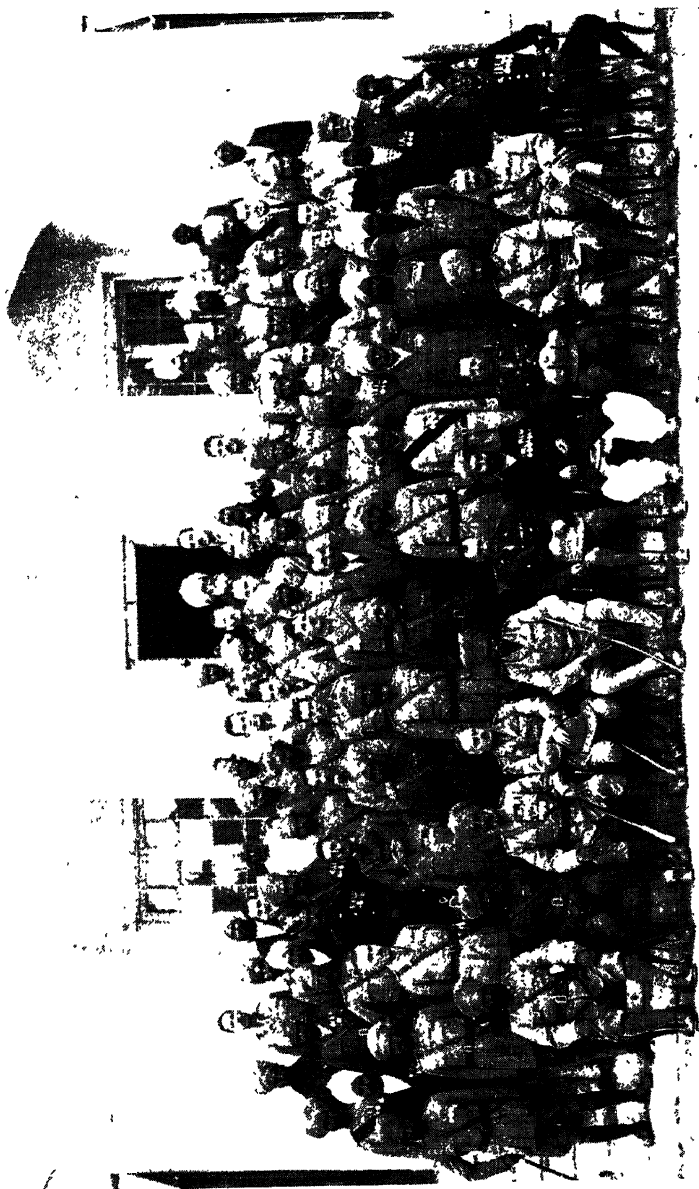
POSTING OF PERSONNEL ON DISBANDMENT OF
THE CORPS OF BOMBAY PIONEERS.*1st (Marine) Battalion.*

	Name.	Posting Orders.
Lt.-Col.	A. K. Macpherson, M.V.O.	Retiring.
Major	E. H. B. Ozanne	20th Burma Rifles.
"	C. A. G. Rundle, M.C. ..	16th Punjab Regiment.
Captain	B. H. Chappel	2nd Punjab Regiment.
"	T. D. L'E. Grant	2nd Punjab Regiment.
"	G. Plomer	*7th Rajput Regiment.
"	G. L. Tomkins, M.C. ..	10th Baluch. Regiment.
"	W. V. Clark	5th Mahratta Light Infantry.
"	D. R. Stanley	*10th Baluch. Regiment.
"	J. E. B. Seager	7th Rajput Regiment.
"	W. L. Alston, O.B.E. ..	6th Rajputana Rifles.
"	O. K. Steveni	9th Gurkha Rifles.
"	S. F. H. Williams	7th Gurkha Rifles.
"	J. F. Kekwick	2nd Punjab Regiment.
"	F. D. K. Simmance	9th Jat Regiment.
Lieut.	M. H. Walters	13th Frontier Force Rifles.
"	P. B. Keily	9th Gurkha Rifles.
"	R. F. L. Thomas	14th Punjab Regiment.

2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion.

Major	B. H. Wallis, M.C.	16th Punjab Regiment.
"	M. A. S. Cousens	8th Punjab Regiment.
Captain	R. D. Whitehill	*2nd Punjab Regiment.
"	R. R. B. Falcon	5th Mahratta Light Infantry.
"	A. H. Virgin	20th Burma Rifles.
"	P. W. Finch	7th Rajput Regiment.
"	B. S. Sowton	10th Baluch. Regiment.
"	W. R. Lloyd-Jones	11th Sikh Regiment.
"	L. H. Worlledge	*19th Hyderabad Regiment.
"	F. W. Haswell	4th Gurkha Rifles.
"	R. W. Kearns	7th Rajput Regiment.
"	J. N. Mackay	4th Gurkha Rifles.
"	R. B. Broadbent	6th Rajputana Rifles.
"	R. T. W. Macleod	1st Punjab Regiment.
Lieut.	J. W. Hay	*9th Jat Regiment.
"	J. R. L. Roberts	2nd Punjab Regiment.

* Indicates that the officer was to be seconded for service with Sappers and Miners.



A RE-UNION FOR PENSIONERS OF ALL BATTALIONS OF THE 2ND BOMBAY PIONEERS, AGRA, JANUARY, 1927.

On this occasion the Marine Battalion celebrated its 150th Anniversary.

Corps Headquarters.

Lt.-Col. M. C. Coote	5th Mahratta Light Infantry.
„ E. H. Chapman	Retiring.
Captain W. N. Andrews, Q.M. ..	Rl. Bombay Sappers and Miners.

Other officers with Corps Headquarters were attached from the active battalions.

INDIAN OFFICERS.

1st (Marine) Battalion.

Subadar-Major Shankar Baber	
Subadar Shadi Khan, I.D.S.M.	K.G.O. Bengal Sappers and Miners.
„ Ganpat Barge	
„ Binda Singh	
„ Khalil Ahmad Khan	M.G. Platoons of British Infantry.
„ Krishnarao Bhosle	Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners.
„ Sohan Gaekwad	
„ Amar Singh	M.G. Platoons of British Infantry.
„ Mul Singh	M.G. Platoons of British Infantry.
Jemadar Abdul Subhan Khan	
„ Ali Husain	
„ Nihal Khan	
„ Phul Khan	M.G. Platoons of British Infantry.
„ Khanmal Khan	
„ Shankar Sangli	5th Mahratta Light Infantry.
„ Mohan Singh	
„ Maruti Duduskar	
„ Sher Singh	Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners.
„ Hambirao Powar	
„ Maghar Singh	M.G. Platoons of British Infantry.
„ Naryan Bhor	Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners.

2nd (Kelat-i-Ghilzie) Battalion.

Subadar-Major Babu Parte	
Subadar Abdul Razaq	
„ Achchar Singh	
„ Gulzar Mahammad	
„ Sohrab Khan	M.G. Platoons of British Infantry.
„ Amar Singh	M.G. Platoons of British Infantry.
„ Hari Kadam	
„ Dinkar Rao Kachre	
Jemadar Shakir Ali	
„ Karim Khan	
„ Munir Khan	K.G.O. Bengal Sappers and Miners.
„ Hayat Khan	
„ Labh Singh	
„ Sundar Singh	
„ Shibdayal Singh	M.G. Platoons of British Infantry.
„ Wasawa Singh	M.G. Platoons of British Infantry.
„ Babu Jadow	Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners.
„ Babu Ingoli	
„ Mahar Singh	2nd Punjab Regiment.

Corps Headquarters.

Subadar-Major Bhagat Singh, I.D.S.M.,

M.S.M. M.G. Platoons of British Infantry.

Jemadar Falel Mahammad
and others attached from 1st and 2nd Bns.

A blank space in the Posting Order column represents that the Indian Officer was mustered out of the service. Several of the senior Indian Officers were awarded the honorary rank of Lieutenant or Subadar-Major on being compulsorily retired.

Non-commissioned officers and men.

The following numbers of N.C.O.s and men, including recruits with Corps Headquarters, were transferred to other units. The remainder were mustered out.

- 265 to the Machine Gun Platoons of British Infantry Bns.
- 187 „ K.G.O. Bengal Sappers and Miners.
- 275 „ The Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners.
- 118 „ The 2nd Punjab Regiment.
- 121 „ The 5th Mahratta Light Infantry.
- 22 „ The 9th Jat Regiment.

and, in addition, 22 specialists (clerks and artificers) were transferred to the Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners.

APPENDIX 11

DISPOSAL OF FUNDS AND PROPERTY

Copy of letter dated at Kirkee the 10th February, 1933.

To the Adjutant-General in India,
Army Headquarters,
New Delhi.

I forward herewith Consolidated Statement showing the disposal of all the regimental and private funds of the Corps of Bombay Pioneers.

The balances of all public funds have been credited to Government.

2. *Cash Distribution.*

The statement shows a total cash distribution of Rs. 47,798—4—3 to Indian Ranks. This has been sanctioned by you.

3. The Officers' loan funds have been distributed to the officers concerned, in accordance with your instructions.

4. *Disposal of Mess Plate, trophies and other ornaments.*

A portion of these has been distributed to present and past officers as mementoes.

A portion of the balance has been distributed to units and military institutions (*vide* List at end of this Appendix).

After the sale of the remainder, the accruing balance has been added to the officers' share of the private funds shewn in the Statement.

5. *Donations from Indian Ranks' share of private funds.*

The statement of funds shows that the balance of the Indian ranks' share of private funds has been distributed to units absorbing our men and to various educational and benevolent institutions and hospitals in India. We have, in the case of every single donation to an institution or hospital, assured ourselves that the money donated will be utilized to the best advantage of the army in general and the classes enlisted in the Corps of Bombay Pioneers in particular. We have adopted the principle of paying donations as far as possible through Deputy Commissioners, or other responsible officials.

6. *Junior United Service Club.*

See item (a) of Statement.

Arrangements have been made that all officers retired and now serving of the Corps of Bombay Pioneers shall be Honorary Life

THE BOMBAY PIONEERS

RECEIPTS.

		British Officers' share private funds.	Indian Ranks' share private funds.	Regimental funds.
1st (Marine) Battalion ..	Rs.	6770 13 4	18468 13 4	4293 1 10
2nd (K.I.G.) Battalion ..	..	23113 11 5	24030 11 1	945 15 4
Corps Headquarters ..	..	6170 2 8	14895 10 11	1241 8 9
Central Fund of Corps	9133 12 11	31671 1 8	—

Totals ..	Rs.	<u>47188 8 4</u>	<u>89066 5 0</u>	<u>6480 9 11</u>
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EXPENDITURE.

	British Officers' share private funds.	Indian Ranks' share private funds.	Regimental Funds.
Junior United Service Club (a) Rs. 20294	8 10	—	—
Annual Dinner Club and Corps History (b)	15266 14 3	—	—
Lady Grover's Fund for officers' families (c)	8537 8 6	—	—
Despatch, insurance, repairs, etc., of Mess Silver and property ..	2835 2 0	—	—
Dr. balance of certain minor items ..	19 6 7	109 6 4	—
Cash distribution to Indian Ranks ..	—	47798 4 3	—
Return of subscriptions to Sikhs of Corps, paid by them for building new Garudwara	—	1121 12 6	—
1st Battn. for adjustment of expenditure	—	836 0 0	—
2nd Battn. ditto	—	150 0 0	—
Corps Headquarters ditto	—	30 0 0	—
DONATIONS TO INSTITUTIONS.			
Queen Mary's Technical School for disabled Indian soldiers, Poona	—	2000 0 0	—
Handyside Memorial Hospital, Peshawar	—	5000 0 0	—
Mayo Hospital, Lahore	—	2000 0 0	—
Khanzada Anjuman, Nuh	—	1500 0 0	—
Deputy Commissioner, Rohtak, for Jats Educational Institutions ..	—	2500 0 0	—
Deputy Commissioner, Rohtak, for Ranghars Educational Institutions	—	2000 0 0	—
Tanda High School, Tanda	—	3264 0 0	—
Nuh High School, Nuh	—	4000 0 0	—
Mahratta War Memorial Fund ..	—	3000 0 0	—
Shri Shivaji Preparatory Military School, Poona	—	1000 0 0	—
DONATIONS TO UNITS.			
K.G.O. Bengal Sappers and Miners	—	2277 11 1	3240 4 11
Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners	—	5241 11 0	3240 5 0
2nd Punjab Regiment	—	1500 0 0	—
5th Mahratta Light Infantry	—	1500 0 0	—
British Infantry Training Coy. ..	—	1500 0 0	—
Handed over to Capt. Whitehill for "Bombay Pioneers' Account" ..	—	737 4 10	—
	47188 8 4	89066 5 0	6480 9 11

(Signed) A. K. MACPHERSON,
Lieut.-Colonel,
Senior Officer, The Corps of Bombay Pioneers.
Kirkee, 10th February, 1933.

Members of the Junior United Service Club, London, in consideration of a sum amounting to £1,500. Certain articles of Mess Plate, etc., have been deposited with this Club.

See item (b) of Statement.

A sum from the officers' share of the Private Funds has been allotted to endow the Bombay Pioneers' Annual Dinner and for a regimental history.

7. *Lady Grover's Hospital Fund.*

See item (c) of Statement.

All officers borne on the books of the Corps at the date of disbandment have been made Life Participants of Lady Grover's Hospital Fund for Officers' Families.

8. The Statement shows a sum as handed over to Captain R. D. Whitehill, 2nd (K.I.G.) Bn. Bombay Pioneers, who is remaining in Kirkee attached to the Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners, and instructions for the disposal of this money have been handed to him.

(Signed) A. K. MACPHERSON,
Lieut.-Colonel,
Senior Officer, The Corps of Bombay Pioneers.

DISPOSAL OF MESS SILVER.

Silver presented by individual officers was returned to the donors, or to the next-of-kin of deceased officers.

The following list shows the distribution of the better known pieces of plate, etc. :—

Sent to—	War Memorial Cigar Box ..	121st Pioneers.
The Junior United	Bombay Yacht Club Cup ..	„
Service Club.	Band Havildars Sash ..	„
	Centrepiece, with statuettes	107th Pioneers.
	S.B.R.A. Quetta Cup ..	„
	Cigar Box	„
	Cigarette Box	„
	Candelabra	„
	Snuff Mull and some other	
	silver	„
	Silver model of Kelat-i-	12th Pioneers.
	Ghilzie, with statuettes,	
	and plan	
	Jat Memorial Huqqa ..	„
	Fraser-Tytler Cups ..	„
	Snuff Box, on ram's head ..	„
	War Memorial Cup ..	128th Pioneers.
	Two Promotion Bowls ..	„
	Three Candelabra ..	„
	Medals in case	„
	Photo Albums ..	of all Battalions.

Presented to—	Centrepiece Candelabra ..	121st Pioneers.
The Royal Indian	Becke Memorial Cup ..	„
Marine (now the	Civil Service Cup ..	„
Royal Indian Navy),	Bombay Sports Cup ..	„
Bombay.	Hockey Shield ..	„
	Two sideboards, carved	
	with “Anchor Badge” ..	„
K.G.O. Bengal Sappers and Miners.	Statuette of Meo sepoy ..	121st Pioneers.
	Col. Stevens’ Clock ..	107th Pioneers.
	Baghdad Sports Cup ..	12th Pioneers.
	Shield	2/12th Pioneers.
Royal Bombay Sappers and Miners.	Dining-out Slate ..	121st Pioneers.
	War Memorial Quarter-Guard Bell.	107th Pioneers.
	Cross-country Cup ..	„
	Three Seringapatam engravings	„
	Medals in Case	„
	Badges	„
	Pioneer cross-belt ..	„
	Iraq Sports Club Cup ..	12th Pioneers.
	Empress Prize, Delhi, 1877	„
	Survey Chain, K.I.G. Fort	„
	Mess Centrepiece ..	128th Pioneers.
	Col. Brownrigg’s clock ..	„
	Col. Goodfellow’s clock ..	„
	Library	„
	Some War Trophies ..	„
	Shield	48th Pioneers.
The 5th Mahratta Light Infantry.	10/2nd Bo. Prs. Sports Cup	121st Pioneers.
	Three-handled Cup ..	107th Pioneers.
	Silver Agdan	„
	Cornet	„
	Col. Creagh’s Cup ..	128th Pioneers.
The 2nd Punjab Regiment.	“Knowle’s” Competition Cup.	107th Pioneers.
	Inter-regimental Rifle Cup, 1876-77.	12th Pioneers.
	Lieut.’s Wahab’s Cup ..	128th Pioneers.
Placed in H.E. The Viceroy’s House, New Delhi.	Drum-Major’s Staff (War Memorial)	107th Pioneers.
The Senior Officers’ School, Belgaum.	6th Division Challenge Cup	107th Pioneers.
	A salver	„
	Poona Polo Cup, 1891 ..	128th Pioneers.
	War and Shikar Trophies, and pictures.	107th and 128th Pioneers.

Royal Military College, Sandhurst.	Inter - company Hockey Shield.	107th Pioneers.
Indian Military Academy, Dehra Dun.	Muttra Rifle Cup	12th Pioneers.
Army Signal School, Poona.	Some War and Shikar trophies.	128th Pioneers.
H.Q. Poona Brigade Area.	Cup	2/128th Pioneers.
H.Q. Nowshera Brigade Area.	E. D. Sassoon's Cup ..	12th Pioneers.
Poona and Kirkee Hunter and Polo Pony Show.	Shargat Area Sports Championship Cup.	12th Pioneers.
	Shargat Area Hockey Cup.	„
Returned to the 2nd Bn. South Lancashire Regiment.	Jug presented by them in 1898.	107th Pioneers
Returned to the 22nd Mountain Battery, R.A.	Cup presented by them ..	12th Pioneers.
Presented to Lt.-Col. F. E. W. Baldwin (as he was in charge of the work).	G.I.P. Railway Cup ..	121st Pioneers.
Major F. M. Lane ..	Sikh Statuette	128th Pioneers.

N.B.—On the disbandment of the 48th Pioneers in 1926, a considerable amount of silver and trophies were returned to the donors, but the chief pieces were handed over, in trust, to the Officers' Mess of the 10th Battalion 2nd Bombay Pioneers.

* * * * *

In the illustration of "The Bombay Pioneers' Mess at East Kirkee," the Kelat-i-Ghilzie centrepiece and some other pieces of plate named above can be recognized.

APPENDIX 12

Officers formerly of the Bombay Pioneers who are Honorary Life Members of the Junior United Service Club :—

ADAMS, A. W., Captain, O.B.E.
 ALEXANDER, C., Lieut.-Colonel, M.C.
 ALSTON, W. L. Captain, O.B.E.
 ANDERSON, K. E., Major.
 ANDREW, F. A., Brig.-General, D.S.O.
 ANDREWS, D. E., Captain.
 ANDREWS, W. N., Major.
 ASHBURNER, H. W., Lieut.-Colonel, D.S.O.
 ASHFIELD, P., Major.
 BAINES, E. F. E., Colonel, D.S.O.
 BAINES, R. H., Captain, M.C.
 BALDWIN, F. E. W., Lieut.-Colonel.
 BANNANTYNE, N. C., Major-General, C.B., C.I.E.
 BENNETT, N. B., Captain.
 BICKFORD, W. W., Colonel, C.I.E., D.S.O.
 BLACKWELL, H., Lieut.-Colonel, O.B.E.
 BOYCE, R. B., Lieut.-Colonel.
 BROADBENT, R. B., Captain.
 BURDETT, E. W., Lieut.-Colonel, D.S.O., M.C.
 BURTON, G. H., Captain, M.C.
 CHAPMAN, E. H., Lieut.-Colonel.
 CHAPPEL, B. H., Captain.
 CLARK, W. V., Captain.
 CLARKE, G. A., Lieut.-Colonel.
 CLOUGH, G., Captain.
 COCHRAN, G. E. W., Colonel, D.S.O.
 COOK, H. P., Lieut.-Colonel.
 COOPER, G. C., Major, M.C.
 COOTE, M. C., Lieut.-Colonel.
 COUSINS, M. A. S., Major.
 CRAUFURD, J. A. Houson, Brig.-General, C.M.G., C.B.E.
 CREAGH, A. H. D., Colonel, C.M.G., M.V.O.
 CREGAN, J. S. G. A., Captain.
 CUMING, R. J., Colonel, D.S.O., O.B.E.
 CUNNINGHAM, C. C., Lieut.-Colonel, D.S.O.
 DAVIES, G. B., Major.
 DAVIS, G. E. P., Lieut.-Colonel, O.B.E.

- DALDY, A. W., Colonel, O.B.E.
DOWNIE-LESLIE, N., Major.
DREDGE, A. C. L., Lieutenant.
DUNSCOMBE, N. B., Lieut.-Colonel, O.B.E.
ELLIS, A. C. S. B., Colonel, C.B.E.
FAIRLEY, W. M., Captain.
FALCON, R. R. B., Captain.
FAREBROTHER, F. H., Lieut.-Colonel.
FERRIER, I., Lieut.-Colonel.
FINCH, P. W., Captain.
GEIDT, E. W., Captain.
GOAD, C. E. G. B., Lieut.-Colonel, M.C.
GODDARD, E. N., Lt.-Col., M.V.O., O.B.E., M.C.
GOODFELLOW, N. G. B., Colonel, C.I.E.
GOVER, A. C., Major, M.C.
GRAHAM, D. S., Lieut.-Colonel.
GRAHAM, J. S., Lieut.-Colonel.
GRANT, T. G. L. E., Captain.
GRAY, D. B., Lieut.-Colonel, O.B.E., M.C.
GREIG, J. G., Lieut.-Colonel, C.I.E.
GREY, C. A., Captain.
GRIFFITH, L., Colonel, D.S.O.
HANSON, F. A., Captain.
HARE, H. J., Captain.
HARLEY, A. B., Colonel, D.S.O.
HARVEY-WILLIAMS, S. F., Captain.
HARWARD, A. J. N., Colonel, C.B.
HASLER, H. J., Captain, M.C.
HASWELL, F. W., Captain.
HATHORNTHWAITE, J. C., Major.
HAWKES, W. C. W., Colonel, D.S.O.
HAY, J. W., Lieutenant.
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YEATES, E. P., Major.
YOUNG, B. N., Major.

APPENDIX 13

AUTHORITIES

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